Cath Arcedeckne 1791

THE

SORROWS

OF

WERTER:

A

GERMAN STORY.

——*Tædet cœli convexa tueri.*

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:

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M.DCC.LXXXIX.

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PREFACE.

THOSE who expect a Novel will be diſappointed in this work, which contains few characters and few events; and the deſign of which is to exhibit a picture of that diſordered ſtate of mind, too common in our own country. It is drawn by the maſterly hand of Mr. Goethé *, *and is perhaps little more than the relation of a fact which happened within his knowledge. It went through ſeveral editions in German, and ſoon made its way into France. About two years ſince, the Engliſh tranſlator met*

* Doctor of Civil Law, and author of ſome dramatic pieces which are much eſteemed.

with

with it; and, being ſtruck with the uncommon genius and originality of the thoughts, and the energy with which they are expreſſed, tranſlated ſome of the letters from the French; and led on by the beauty of the work, which encreaſed in proportion as it was attended to, the whole was inſenſibly finiſhed; and, as no tranſlation from the German has hitherto appeared, it is now offered to the Public.

Among the number of pamphlets which this little work gave occaſion to, there were not wanting ſome which cenſured it; and Mr. Goethé *has been called the apologiſt of Suicide, by thoſe who, not diſtinguiſhing the* Author *from the* Work, *very abſurdly aſcribed to him the erroneous ſentiments which he has given to his principal Character,—a method of criticiſm which would equally affect all the epic and tragic writers that ever exiſted.*

WERTER *appears to have been ſtrongly impreſſed with ſentiments of religion; and it is not to be wondered at, that in his ſtate of mind they ſhould take an irregular form, and ſometimes border upon extravagance. A few expreſſions which had this appearance, have been omitted by the French, and a few more by the Engliſh tranſlator, as they might poſſibly give offence in a work of this nature.*

WERTER,

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WERTER, &c.

LETTER I.

May 4.

I AM glad that I went away.—Could I leave you, my companion, my friend, that I might be more at eaſe? The heart of man is inexplicable. But you forgive me, I know you do. The connections I had formed, were they not ſufficient to torment ſuch a diſpoſition as mine? Poor Eleonora! But am I to be blamed for the tenderneſs which took poſſeſſion of her heart, whilſt I was admiring the beauty of her ſiſter? No! ſurely I am innocent: yet perhaps not entirely ſo; I might en-

courage her affection, and you have ſeen me pleaſed, amuſed, with the ſimple expreſſion of her tenderneſs *. Many cauſes might I find of reproach; but I promiſe you to deſiſt, my dear friend. I will not always be looking back, and dwelling on the painful remembrance of the ſufferings I have endured. I will enjoy the preſent and forget the paſt. You are certainly in the right; that fatal diſpoſition which makes us recal paſt ſcenes and paſt ſorrows, greatly adds to the number of the wretched.

Be ſo good to tell my mother that I am employed about her affairs, and that I ſhall ſoon write to give her an account of them. I have ſeen my aunt: inſtead of being ill-tempered and malevolent, as ſhe was repreſented to me, ſhe is the moſt chearful, agreeable woman you ever ſaw, and has the beſt heart in the world. I explained to her my mother's wrongs, with

* This firſt object of his affection is ſuppoſed to be dead, and has nothing to do with the following ſtory.

regard

regard to that part of her portion which has been kept back. She told me the motives for her own conduct, and the terms upon which ſhe is very willing to give up the whole, and do more than we have aſked. But I will ſay no more on the ſubject at preſent; only aſſure my mother, that every thing will go on well. I find on this occaſion, as on many others, that neglect and miſunderſtandings create more trouble and uneaſineſs, than diſhoneſty and malice; and they are indeed much more frequent alſo.

I am very well pleaſed with my ſituation here. Solitude in this terreſtrial paradiſe is a medicine to my mind. The delight of ſpring touches my heart, and gives freſh vigour to my ſoul. Every tree, every buſh, is full of flowers, and a delicious perfume fills the air. The town itſelf is diſagreeable; but the fineſt kind of country, and the greateſt natural beauties, are in its environs. Upon one of the neighbouring hills, which form a chain,

and diverſify our landſcape, the late Marquis of M. made a garden: it is ſimple, and at firſt ſight it is eaſy to perceive that it was not laid out by a gardener, but by a man of taſte and feeling for his own enjoyment. I have already given ſome tears to the memory of its departed maſter, in an arbour that is now almoſt in ruins, which was his favourite ſpot, and is at preſent mine. I ſhall ſoon have entire poſſeſſion of this garden; the gardener is in my intereſt, and he won't be a loſer by it.

LETTER II.

May 10.

MY mind is calm and ſerene, like the firſt fine mornings of ſpring. Solitude and tranquillity, in a country ſo ſuited to a diſpoſition like mine, give me an enjoyment of life. Life itſelf is happineſs, and the pleaſure of mere exiſtence ſo entirely abſorbs me, that I neglect my talents;

talents; I don't draw, I can't make a ſtroke with the pencil, and yet I am a greater painter than ever. Thin undulating vapours are ſpread over the plain; thick tufted trees defend me from the meridian ſun, which only checkers my ſhade with a few rays. Here, extended on the long graſs near the fall of a brook, I admire the infinite variety of plants, and grow familiar with all the little inſects that ſurround me, as they hum amongſt the flowers, or creep in the graſs. Then I feel the divine breath of that all-powerful Being which created us; whoſe eternal love ſupports and comforts us, A darkneſs ſpreads over my eyes; heaven and earth ſeem to dwell in my ſoul, and abſorb all its powers, like the idea of a beloved miſtreſs. Oh! that I could expreſs, that I could deſcribe, theſe great conceptions, with the ſame warmth, with the ſame energy, that they are impreſſed on my ſoul! but the ſublimity of them aſtoniſhes and overpowers me.

LETTER III.

May 12.

FAIRIES and Genii hover over my ſteps, or the moſt lively imagination influences my ſenſes, and fills my heart. All Paradiſe is before me. Here is a fountain, to which I am attached by a ſort of enchantment, like Meluſina and her ſiſters. It is a ſpring of pure and clear water, which guſhes from the rock, in a cave at the bottom of one of the hills; about twenty rough ſteps lead to it; the high trees which hang over it, the cool refreſhing air of the place, every thing is agreeable, intereſting, ſtriking. I never fail to go to it every day, and generally paſs an hour there. The young girls come from the town to fetch water from it—innocent and neceſſary employment, and formerly the occupation of kings daughters. The time of the patriarchs preſents itſelf to my imagination. I ſee our anceſtors

tors concluding treaties and making alliances by the ſide of fountains, propitious angels bearing witneſs. Whoever does not enter into theſe ſenſations, my dear friend, has never really enjoyed cool repoſe by the ſide of a ſpring, after a long ſummer's walk.

LETTER IV.

May 13.

YOU offer me books; I will have nothing to do with them: for heaven's ſake don't ſend me any. I don't wiſh to be again guided, heated, agitated. Alas! my heart is of itſelf but too much agitated already. I want ſtrains that may lull me; and Homer furniſhes them in abundance. Often have I ſtrove to calm the blood that ſeemed boiling in my veins; often have I endeavoured to ſtop the keen and ſudden paſſions of my heart

—But 'tis not to you that I need explain its feelings; you have often ſeen with concern my quick tranſitions from ſorrow to immoderate joy, and from ſoft melancholy to violent and dangerous paſſions. My heart is like a ſick child; and like a ſick child I let it have its way:—But that between ourſelves; for I know I ſhould be blamed for it.

LETTER V.

May 15.

I AM already very much known and beloved by all the common people here, particularly the children. At firſt when I took notice of them and ſpoke to them, they anſwered me rather roughly, and thought I meant to inſult them. However, I was not diſcouraged; but I found the truth of an obſervation I had often made before—that people of condition keep their inferiors at a great diſtance,

tance, as if they could loſe their dignity by coming near them. It is only a ſchool-boy's wantonneſs, or very poor pretence to wit, which could poſſibly make any body affect to deſcend to the ſame level with their inferiors, in order afterwards to treat them with contempt and ridicule. I know that we are not, nor cannot be all equal; but whoever keeps aloof from the people, in order to gain reſpect, I look upon as a coward, who hides himſelf leſt he ſhould not be able to ſtand before his adverſary.

The laſt time I was at the fountain, I found a young woman on the ſteps, with her pail ſtanding by her, waiting till ſomebody came who might help to put it on her head. "Shall I help you, my dear?" I ſaid. "Oh! no! Sir," ſhe anſwered, colouring. "Make no ceremony," ſaid I, and helped her to lift the pail; ſhe thanked me, and went up the ſteps.

LETTER VI.

May 17.

I HAVE made many acquaintance here; but I have as yet no ſociety. I don't know what it is in me that can attract the inhabitants of this city; but they ſeek me, attach themſelves to me, and then I am ſorry that I can go no further with them. You aſk me, what ſort of people they are here? Juſt ſuch, my dear friend, as are to be met with every where elſe. Men are much the ſame. The generality are forced to labour the greateſt part of their time, merely to procure nouriſhment; and the ſmall portion that remains is ſo irkſome to them, that they are contriving every method in their power to get rid of it. Such is the lot of man!

However, there is a ſort of people, very good, and very amiable, with whom I often forget myſelf, and am diſſipated enough to enjoy a great deal of that pleaſure

ſure which is natural to us. A chearful meal, a neat table, gaiety with frankneſs and openneſs of heart, a walk, a dance, and other little amuſements in their company, have a good effect on my diſpoſition: but then it is neceſſary that I ſhould forget thoſe other qualities in me which lie dormant, uſeleſs; and which I am even obliged carefully to conceal from them. Alas! this idea ſinks my ſpirits! and yet, my dear friend, 'tis the fate of all that are like me, not to be underſtood.

Why have I no longer the friend of my youth? or why did I ever know her? I might ſay to myſelf, "Werter, it is a vain purſuit; thou art ſeeking what is not to be found!" But I had found it: I did find and know an exalted mind, which raiſed me beyond myſelf, and made me all that I am capable of being. All the powers of my ſoul were extended, and the deep ſentiment which nature engraved on my heart was unfolded. What an intercourſe! Our ideas, our expreſſions, were thoſe

thoſe of nature; and the pureſt affection warmed our hearts: and now—but ſhe was before me in the career; ſhe is gone, and has left me alone in the world. Her memory will be ever dear to my heart. Oh! I can never forget the ſtrength of her mind, and the indulgence of her temper.

A few days ſince I met with Mr. V. an agreeable young man, with a very pleaſing countenance. He is lately come from the univerſity; and does not think himſelf a prodigy, though he may perhaps ſee his ſuperiority to many that he meets with. Indeed he appears to have applied a good deal, and has acquired much knowledge. Having heard that I underſtood Greek, and could draw (two very extraordinary things in this country) he came immediately to ſee me, and diſplayed his whole ſtock of literature, from Batteux to Wood, and from De Piles to Winkelmann; aſſured me he had read all the firſt part of Sultzer's Theory, and was in poſſeſſion of a manu-

manuſcript of De Heyne's on the Study of the Antique. I forgave him all this.

I am become acquainted too with a very worthy man, who is ſteward to the prince. He is free and open in his manner, and loves ſociety. I am told that nothing is more pleaſing than to ſee him ſurrounded by his family. He has nine children; and the eldeſt daughter is much talked of and admired. He gave me an invitation to his houſe, and I intend going the firſt opportunity. He is about a league and a half from hence, at a hunting-lodge which the prince gave him leave to inhabit, after the loſs of his wife: he loved her extremely; and could not bear to continue in the ſteward's houſe, where ſhe died.

I have beſides fallen in with ſome ridiculous people, or rather they have put themſelves in my way. Every thing in them is inſupportable: but worſt of all are their profeſſions of friendſhip. Adieu.

I think

I think this letter muſt pleaſe you; it is all hiſtorical.

LETTER VII.

May 22.

THAT life is but a dream, is the opinion of many; and it is alſo mine. When I ſee the narrow limits which confine the penetrating, active genius of man; when I ſee that all his powers are waſted to ſatisfy mere neceſſities, the only end of which is to prolong a miſerable exiſtence; that our ſeeming care, with regard to certain inquiries, is but a blind reſignation; and that we only amuſe ourſelves with painting brilliant figures and ſmiling landſcapes on the walls of our priſon, whilſt we ſee on all ſides of us the boundary which confines us: when I conſider theſe things, my dear friend, I am ſilent: I examine myſelf; and what do I find? Alas!

more vague deſires, preſages, and viſions, than I find of conviction, truth, and reality: then all is chaos and confuſion before my eyes; and dreaming like others, I let myſelf be carried away by the ſtream.

All wiſe inſtitutors and learned teachers agree, that children are ignorant of the cauſe which excites their will. But that the great children, as well as the little ones, ſhould wander upon this earth, without knowing whence they came, or whither they go; without any certain motives for their conduct, but guided, like them, by biſcuits, ſugar-plums, and rods; this is what nobody is willing to acknowledge, and yet nothing, I think, can be more evident.

I foreſee what you will ſay in anſwer to this; and I will allow, that the happieſt amongſt us are thoſe, who, like children, think not of the morrow, amuſe themſelves with playthings, dreſs and undreſs their dolls, watch with great reſpect before the cupboard where mama keeps the ſweet-

meats,

meats, and when they get any, eat them directly, and cry for more: Theſe are certainly happy beings. Many alſo are to be envied, who dignify their paltry employments, ſometimes even their paſſions, with pompous titles; and who repreſent themſelves to mankind as beings of a ſuperior order, whoſe occupation it is to promote their welfare and glory. But the man who in all humility acknowledges the vanity of all theſe things; obſerves with what pleaſure the wealthy citizen tranſforms his little garden into paradiſe; with what patience the poor man bears his burthen; and that all wiſh equally to behold the ſun yet a little longer; he too may be at peace; he creates a world of his own, and is happy alſo becauſe he is a man: but however limited his ſphere, he preſerves in his boſom the idea of liberty, and feels that he has it in his power to quit his priſon.

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LETTER VIII.

May 26.

YOU know my way of chooſing a little favourite ſpot; how I make my arrangements, and ſettle myſelf in it. I have found one here which entirely ſuits me.

About a league from the town is a place called Walheim. It is very agreeably ſituated on the ſide of a hill; from one of the paths which lead out of the village, you have a view of the whole country; and there is a good old woman who ſells wine, coffee, and tea, there: but better than all this are two lime-trees before the church, which ſpread their branches over a little green, ſurrounded by barns and cottages. I have ſeen few places more retired and peaceful. I ſend for a chair and table from the old woman's, and there I drink my coffee, and read Homer. It was by accident that I diſcovered this

place, one fine afternoon: all was perfect ſtillneſs; every body was in the fields, except a little boy about four years old, who was ſitting on the ground, and holding between his knees a child of about ſix months; he preſſed it to his boſom with his little arms, which made a ſort of great chair for it, and notwithſtanding the vivacity which ſparkled in his black eyes, he ſat perfectly ſtill. Quite delighted with the ſcene, I ſat down on a plough oppoſite, and had great pleaſure in drawing this little picture of brotherly tenderneſs. I added a bit of the hedge, the barn-door, and ſome broken cart-wheels, without any order, juſt as they happened to lie; and in about an hour I found I had made a drawing of great expreſſion, and very correct deſign, without having put in any thing of my own. This confirmed me in the reſolution I had before made, only to copy Nature for the future. Nature is inexhauſtible, and alone forms the greateſt maſters. What is alledged in favour of rules,

rules, is nearly the ſame as what is ſaid in favour of the laws of ſociety: an artiſt formed upon them will never produce any thing abſolutely bad or diſguſting; as a man, who obeys the laws, and obſerves decorum, can never be a decided villain, or a very intolerable neighbour. But yet, ſay what you will of rules, they alter the true features, and the natural expreſſion. You will tell me, that they only lop off ſuperfluous branches, and prevent the extravagant. Let us compare talents to love, my dear friend. Let us ſuppoſe a man attached to a young woman, dedicating to her every hour of the day, wearing his health, laviſhing his fortune, to convince her each moment that he is entirely devoted to her. Then comes a man of cold and correct underſtanding; a man who acts perhaps in a public character; and this very reſpectable perſon ſays to him, "My young friend, love is a natural paſſion, but it ſhould be kept within due bounds: Make a proper diviſion of your

time; give ſome to your miſtreſs, reſerve the reſt for buſineſs; calculate your income, and out of the ſuperfluity make preſents to her, but that only from time to time, on her birth-day, or ſuch-like occaſions." If the young man takes this advice, he may be a very uſeful member of ſociety, extremely ſerviceable to his prince; but as to his love it is annihilated; and if he is an artiſt, his genius is fled. Oh! my friend, the torrent of genius would not be ſo confined in its courſe; its impetuous waves would riſe and aſtoniſh us, but that cold and narrow-minded men have taken poſſeſſion of the two ſhores; they have built houſes and planted gardens on its banks; they tremble for their little habitations, and dig trenches, and raiſe dams, to prevent the danger which threatens them.

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LETTER IX.

May 27.

I FELL into declamation and ſimilies, I find; and my enthuſiaſm made me forget to finiſh my narrative. Quite loſt in my ideas of painting, which I unfolded to you at large in my laſt letter, I ſat for two hours upon the plough, and towards evening a young woman with a baſket on her arm came running to the children, who had not moved in all that time. "You are a very good boy, Philip," ſhe called out. I got up and went towards her, and aſked if ſhe was the mother of thoſe pretty children; ſhe anſwered, that ſhe was, gave the eldeſt a cake, took the little one in her arms, and kiſſed it with a mother's tenderneſs. "I left the young child with Philip," ſaid ſhe, "while I went to the town with his brother to buy ſome white bread, ſome ſugar, and an earthen pot to make broth for Jenny to-

night: the boys broke our earthen pot yeſterday, as they were quarrelling for the meat." I enquired where her other ſon was; and whilſt ſhe was telling me that he was driving home two geeſe, he came ſkipping up to us, and gave Philip a little ozier twig. I continued talking with the mother, and found ſhe was the ſchool-maſter's daughter, and that her huſband was gone to Holland upon the death of an uncle he had there. "My huſband found he ſhould be cheated of the inheritance," ſaid ſhe; "for he wrote and received no anſwer to his letters, and ſo he went himſelf. I have not heard of him ſince he ſet out. God grant that no harm may have happened to him!" I left this good woman with regret, gave her a creutzer to buy white bread for little Jenny, when ſhe went next to the town, and a creutzer apiece to the boys, and ſo we parted.

Yes, my dear friend, when I am no longer maſter of myſelf, nothing is more calculated to appeaſe the tumult of my ſenſes,

ſenſes, than the ſight of ſuch a tranquil being. She moves with a happy thoughtleſſneſs in the confined circle of her exiſtence; day after day paſſes without diſquietude; and the falling leaves raiſe no idea, but that of approaching winter.

Since that firſt evening I have gone very often to the ſame place: the children are become familiar with me; they have a bit of ſugar when I drink coffee, and at night they partake of my whey and bread and butter. On Sunday they regularly receive their creutzer; for if I am not there after evening ſervice, the old woman has orders to make the diſtribution.

They are quite at their eaſe with me; tell me all they hear, and their ſimplicity pleaſes me much. Their mother uſed perpetually to be calling out, to tell them they would be troubleſome to the gentleman; and it is with great difficulty I have at length prevailed upon her to let them alone.

LETTER X.

June 16.

WHY don't I write to you?—Do you pretend to penetration, and aſk ſuch a queſtion? You ſhould have gueſſed that I was well, but that—in a word, I had found a perſon that is ſtill nearer to my heart—that I had found—I know not what I have found.

Regularly to give you an account how I learnt to diſtinguiſh the moſt amiable of women, would be difficult. I am contented, happy; and conſequently a bad hiſtorian.

I muſt not call her an angel; that, you will tell me, every body ſays of the woman he loves: and yet I cannot deſcribe to you how perfect ſhe is, nor why ſhe is ſo perfect; ſhe has captivated all my ſenſes.

So much ſimplicity, with ſuch an underſtanding; ſo mild, and yet ſo animated;

ed; a mind ſo placid, and a life ſo active. But all theſe are only the common-place phraſes of abſtract ideas, and don't expreſs a ſingle character or feature. Some other time—but it muſt be now or never. For, between ourſelves, I have, ſince I began my letter been ſeveral times going to throw down my pen and fly to her. I made a vow not to go thither this morning; and I run every moment to the window to ſee if the ſun is ſtill high.

I was not able to hold out; I went there: I am now returned; and whilſt I am eating my bread and butter, will write to you, my dear friend. Nothing can be more touching than to ſee her in the midſt of her little family. But if I go on in this manner, you will know no more at the end of my letter, than you do at the beginning. Be all attention then: for I ſhall endeavour to give ſome method and order to my relation, and enter into a great many details.

I wrote you word ſome time ago, that I had

I had made an acquaintance with Mr. J. the prince's ſteward; and that he had invited me to go and ſee him in his retirement, or rather in his little kingdom. I neglected going, however: and perhaps ſhould never have gone, if chance had not diſcovered to me the hidden treaſure which it contained.

Some of our young men propoſed a little dance in the country, in which I very readily joined. I choſe a good pretty girl for my partner, and rather agreeable too, but nothing very ſtriking; and it was agreed that I ſhould take a coach, and with my partner and her aunt, ſhould call upon Charlotte, and carry her to the ball. "You will ſee a very charming girl," ſaid the young lady, when we came into the avenue which leads to the hunting-lodge. "And take care you don't fall in love with her," added her aunt. "Why?" ſaid I. "Becauſe ſhe is already engaged to a very worthy man," ſhe replied, "who is now gone to ſettle his affairs

fairs upon the death of his father, and ſolicit a very lucrative employment." This intelligence appeared a matter of great indifference to me. When we arrived at the gate, the ſun was ſunk near the tops of the mountains, the air was heavy, and low black clouds ſeemed to be gathering in the horizon. The women began to be apprehenſive, and I foreſaw myſelf a great probability of our party being interrupted; but in order to give them comfort, I put on a very ſagacious look, and aſſured them the weather would be fine.

I got out of the coach. A maid came down, and deſired us to wait one minute for her miſtreſs. I croſſed the court, went up ſtairs, and as I entered the apartment I ſaw ſix children, the eldeſt of which was but eleven years old, all jumping round a young woman, very elegantly ſhaped, and dreſſed in a plain white gown with pink ribands. She had a brown loaf in her hand, and was cutting ſlices of bread and butter, which ſhe diſtributed in a grace-

ful and affectionate manner to the children, according to their age and appetite. Each held up its little hands all the time the ſlice was cutting, thanked Charlotte when he received it, and then ran to the door to ſee the company, and look at the coach which was come to fetch her. "I beg pardon," ſhe ſaid, "for having given you the trouble to come up, and am ſorry to make the ladies wait; but dreſſing, and ſome family buſineſs, made me forget to give my children their little meal, and they don't like to receive it from any body elſe." I muttered ſomething, I don't know what—my whole ſoul was taken up with her air, her voice, her manner; and before I could recover myſelf, ſhe ran into her room for her gloves and fan. Whilſt ſhe was gone the little ones eyed me aſkance. I went up to the youngeſt, who has a moſt pleaſing countenance: he drew back, and Charlotte, juſt then coming in, ſaid, "Lewis, ſhake hands with your couſin." The little fellow held out his hand very

very readily, and I gave him a kiſs. "My couſin," ſaid I to the amiable Charlotte, as I handed her down, "do you think I deſerve the happineſs of being related to you?" She archly replied, "Oh! I have ſuch a number of couſins, I ſhould be ſorry you were the moſt undeſerving of the whole ſet." When Charlotte took leave of them, ſhe deſired Sophy, who was the eldeſt of thoſe left at home, to take great care of the children, and to go to her papa when he returned from walking. She told the little ones to mind their ſiſter Sophy as much as if it was herſelf; and ſome promiſed faithfully that they would: but a little fair girl, of ſix years old, looked rather diſcontented, and ſaid, "but ſhe an't Charlotte though for all that, and, Charlotte, we love you beſt." During this time the two eldeſt boys had got up behind the coach, and at my requeſt ſhe gave them leave to go to the end of the wood, upon condition that they would ſit very ſtill, and hold faſt.

We

We had but juſt ſeated ourſelves in the carriage, talked about the new faſhions and the little hats, and the company we were to meet at the ball, when Charlotte ſtopped the coach, and made her brothers get down. They would kiſs her hand again before they went: the eldeſt ſhewed all the tender attention of a boy of fifteen, and the youngeſt a great deal of warmth and affection. She deſired them again to give her love to the children; and we drove on.

The old lady aſked her if ſhe had read the book ſhe laſt ſent to her. "I cannot ſay I have." ſaid Charlotte, "and I will return it to you. I confeſs I was not pleaſed with that, any more than with the firſt which you ſent me." Imagine my ſurprize, when, having aſked the title, ſhe told me it was ——. Penetration and judgment appeared in every thing ſhe ſaid; each expreſſion ſeemed to light up her features with new charms and new rays of genius, which were

were unfolded by degrees as ſhe found herſelf underſtood.

" When I was very young," ſhe added, " I loved romances better than any thing in the world. Nothing could equal my delight, when I got into a corner on a holiday, and entered with my whole heart and ſoul into all the joy or ſorrow of a Miſs Jenny. I confeſs that ſort of reading has ſtill ſome charms for me; but as I don't read much, the books I do read ſhould be ſuited to my taſte. I prefer the authors who don't carry me to ſcenes too far removed from my own ſituation in life, but where I may ſuppoſe myſelf and thoſe that are about me; and whoſe ſtories are intereſting, touching, like the life I lead in the boſom of my family; which, without being abſolutely paradiſe, is a continual ſource of ſatisfaction and delight." I endeavoured to conceal the emotion which theſe laſt words occaſioned; and it did not laſt long; for, after ſhe had given her opinion of the Vicar of Wakefield,

field, &c. &c. with equal juſtneſs and diſcernment, I could hold no longer; and I began with great eagerneſs to tell her what were my own thoughts on the ſubjects. After ſome time, when Charlotte at length addreſſed herſelf to the other two ladies, I juſt perceived that they were ſtill in the coach. The old lady looked at me ſeveral times with an air of raillery, which however I did not at all mind.

We then talked of dancing. "If it is a fault to love dancing," ſaid ſhe, "I will freely own that I am extremely guilty; no amuſement is more agreeable to me. If any thing diſturbs me I go to my harpſichord, play ſome of the lively airs I have danced to, and all is forgotten." You know me, and will figure to yourſelf my countenance whilſt ſhe was ſpeaking—My looks ſteadfaſtly fixed upon her fine black eyes; my very ſoul attached to her's, and ſeizing her ideas ſo ſtrongly, that I hardly heard the words which expreſſed them. At length I got out of the

coach like one that dreams; and I found myſelf in the aſſembly-room, without knowing how I came there.

They began with minuets. I took out one lady after another, and exactly thoſe who were the moſt diſagreeable could not bring themſelves to leave off. Charlotte and her partner began an Engliſh country dance. Imagine my delight when they came to do the figure with us. You ſhould ſee Charlotte: ſhe ſeems to dance with all her heart and ſoul, and as if ſhe was born for nothing elſe; her figure is all elegance, lightneſs, and grace. I aſked her to dance the ſecond country dance with me; ſhe was engaged, but promiſed herſelf to me for the third; telling me at the ſame time, with the moſt agreeable freedom, that ſhe was very fond of allemandes. "It is the cuſtom here," ſaid ſhe, "for every couple to dance the allemandes together; but my partner will be delighted if I ſave him the trouble, for he does the walſe very ill; I obſerve the lady

you dance with is in the ſame ſituation. I am ſure by your Engliſh country dances, that you muſt do the walſe very well yourſelf; ſo that, if it is agreeable to you to dance the allemandes with me, do you propoſe it to my partner; I will propoſe it to your's." We went to ſettle this affair; and it was agreed that during the allemandes, Charlotte's partner ſhould attend upon mine.

We began; and at firſt amuſed ourſelves with making every poſſible turn with our arms. How graceful and animated all her motions! When the walſe commenced, all the couples, which were whirling round, at firſt joſtled againſt each other. We very judiciouſly kept aloof till the awkward and clumſy had withdrawn; when we joined in there were but two couples left. I never in my life was ſo active; I was more than mortal. To hold in my arms the moſt lovely of women, to fly with her like the wind, and loſe ſight of every other object!—But I own

own to you, I then determined, that the woman I loved, and to whom I had pretenſions, ſhould never do the walſe with any other man.—You will underſtand this.

We took a few turns in the room to recover our breath; and then Charlotte ſat down, and I brought her a few ſlices of lemon, all indeed that were left, which I ſtole from thoſe who were making the negus: ſhe eat ſome with ſugar, and ſeemed to be refreſhed by them; but I was obliged in politeneſs to offer them to the lady who ſat next Charlotte, and ſhe very injudiciouſly took ſome.

We were the ſecond couple in the third country dance. As we were going down (and heaven knows with what extacy I looked at her arms, and her eyes which bore the impreſſion of a natural and lively pleaſure) a lady of a certain age, whoſe agreeable countenance had ſtruck me at firſt ſight, looked at Charlotte, and ſmiled; then held up her finger in a threatening at-

titude, and in a very ſignificant tone of voice ſaid, "Albert! Albert!"

"Who is this Albert," ſaid I to Charlotte, "if it is not impertinent?" She was going to anſwer, when we were obliged to ſeparate for hands ſix round at bottom; and in croſſing over I thought I perceived that ſhe looked penſive. "Why ſhould I conceal it from you?" ſaid ſhe, when ſhe gave me her hand to lead out of ſides; "Albert is a worthy man to whom I am engaged." I had been told this before by the ladies in the coach, but I had not then ſeen Charlotte; I did not know her value. I ſeemed to hear it for the firſt time. I was diſtreſſed, confuſed, wrong in the figure, and put every body out; and Charlotte, by puſhing one and pulling another, with great difficulty ſet us right again.

Whilſt we were dancing, the lightning, which had for ſome time been ſeen in the horizon, and which I had declared to be only ſummer lightning, and proceeding entirely

entirely from heat, became much more violent, and the thunder was heard thro' all the noiſe of the fiddles. Three ladies run out of the ſet; their partners followed; the confuſion became general, and the muſic ſtopped. When any diſtreſs or terror comes upon us in a ſcene of amuſement, it has a ſtronger effect on our minds, either becauſe the contraſt makes us feel it more keenly; or rather, perhaps, becauſe our ſenſes being open to impreſſions of all kinds, the ſhock is more forcibly and quickly perceived. This circumſtance may account in ſome meaſure for the extraordinary contortions and ſhrieks of the ladies. One of the moſt courageous ſat down with her back to the window and ſtopped her ears; another knelt down before her, and hid her face in her lap; a third ſhoved herſelf between them, and embraced her little ſiſter, ſhedding at the ſame time a torrrent of tears: ſome inſiſted upon going home; others, ſtill more diſtreſſed, did not attend to their indiſ-

creet partners, who were ſtealing from their lips thoſe ſighs that were addreſſed to heaven. Some of the gentlemen went down ſtairs to drink a bottle quietly; and the reſt of the company very willingly followed the miſtreſs of the houſe, who had the good ſenſe to conduct us to a room darkened by cloſe window-ſhutters. As ſoon as we came into it, Charlotte drew the chairs round, made us ſit down in a ring, and was eager to begin ſome little play.

More than one of our belles drew up and looked prim, in hopes of ſome agreeable conſequences from the forfeits. "Let us play at counting," ſaid Charlotte. "Obſerve, I am to go from right to left; you are to count one after the other as you ſit, and count faſt: whoever ſtops or miſtakes is to have a box on the ear, and ſo on till we have counted to a thouſand." It was pleaſant to ſee her go round with her hand up. "One," ſays the firſt, "two," the ſecond, "three," the third,

and ſo on, till Charlotte went faſter and faſter. One then miſtook; inſtantly a box on the ear: the next laughed inſtead of ſaying the following number—another box on the ear; and ſtill faſter and faſter. I had two for my ſhare; I fancied they were harder than the reſt, and was much delighted. A general confuſion and laughter put an end to the play, long before we got to a thouſand. The ſtorm ceaſed; the company formed into little parties; Charlotte returned to the aſſembly-room, and I followed her. As we were going, ſhe ſaid, "The blows I inflicted made them forget their apprehenſions; I myſelf was as much afraid as any body, but by affecting courage to keep up the ſpirits of the company, I really loſt my fears." We went to the window, and ſtill heard the thunder at a diſtance; a ſoft rain watered the fields, and filled the air with the moſt delightful and refreſhing ſmells. Leaning upon her arm, Charlotte fixed her eyes on the country before us, then raiſed them

to heaven, and then turned them upon me; they were wet: ſhe put her hand upon mine, and ſaid, "* Klopſtock!" I was oppreſſed with the ſenſations I then felt; I ſunk under the weight of them; I bent down upon her hand, and wetted it with my tears; as I raiſed myſelf, I looked ſtedfaſtly in her face. Divine Klopſtock! why didſt thou not ſee thy apotheoſis in thoſe eyes? And thy name, ſo often profaned, why is it ever pronounced by any voice but Charlotte's?

LETTER XII.

June 19.

I Forget where I broke off my narration; I recollect nothing about it; all I know is, that it was two in the morning when I went to bed, and if I could have

* A celebrated German poet, author of the Meſſiah.

talked

talked to you inſtead of writing to you, I ſhould certainly have kept you till day-light.

I believe I did not tell you what paſſed in our return from the ball, and to day I have not time neither. There was a beautiful ſun-riſing; the whole country was refreſhed, and the rain fell drop by drop from the trees in the foreſt.

Our companions were aſleep: Charlotte aſked me, if I did not wiſh to ſleep too? and deſired I would not make any ceremony on her account. Looking ſtedfaſtly at her, I anſwered, "As long as thoſe eyes continue open, I cannot cloſe mine." We both remained awake till we came to her door: the maid opened it ſoftly, and anſwered to Charlotte's enquiries, that every body was well, and ſtill in bed. I left her, promiſing to ſee her again in the courſe of the day. I kept my word; and ſince that time, ſun, moon, ſtars, may riſe and ſet as they will; I know not whether it is day, or whether it

it is night; the whole world is now nothing to me.

LETTER XIII.

MY days are as happy as thoſe which are reſerved for the Elect; and whatever may be my fate hereafter, I will never ſay that I have not taſted happineſs, and the pureſt happineſs of life. You know Walheim; I am now entirely ſettled there: there I am but half a league from Charlotte; there I enjoy myſelf, and all the pleaſure that a mortal is capable of. When I choſe Walheim for the end of my walks, I little thought that all heaven was ſo near it. How many times, in my long rambles, have I ſeen this hunting-lodge, which now contains the object of all my vows! ſometimes from the top of the hill, ſometimes from the meadow on the oppoſite ſide of the river.

I have

I have often reflected on the deſire men have to extend themſelves, and to make new diſcoveries; and upon that ſecret impulſe, which afterwards inclines them to return to their circle, to conform to the laws of cuſtom, and to embarraſs themſelves no longer with what paſſes either to the right or to the left.

When I firſt came hither, and from the top of the hill contemplated the beauties of this vale, you cannot imagine how I was attracted by every thing I ſaw round me. The little wood oppoſite, how delightful to ſit under its ſhade! how fine the view from that point of rock! How agreeably might one wander in thoſe cloſe valleys, and amongſt thoſe broken hills! I went and came without having found what I wiſhed. Diſtance, my dear friend, is like futurity; a darkneſs is placed before us, and the perceptions of our mind are as obſcure as diſtant objects are to our ſight. We ardently wiſh for a warm and noble energy which might take poſſeſſion of

of our ſouls; we would ſacrifice our whole being to be filled with ſuch a ſentiment.

So the moſt determined traveller returns at length to his country, and finds in his own cottage, in the arms of his wife, in the ſociety of his children, and in the labour neceſſary to maintain them, all the happineſs which he ſought in vain in the vaſt deſerts of the world.

When I go to Walheim at ſun-riſe, gather my own peaſe, and ſit in a corner to ſhell them, and read Homer; when I go into the little kitchen and make a ſoup of them, I figure to myſelf the illuſtrious lovers of Penelope killing and dreſſing their own meat. All deſcriptions of the patriarchal life give me the moſt calm and agreeable ideas; and now, thank Heaven, I can compare to it the life I lead myſelf. Happy it is for me that my heart is capable of feeling the ſame ſimple and innocent pleaſure, as the peaſant who ſees on his table the cabbage he has raiſed with his

his own hand; and who not only enjoys his meal, but remembers alſo, with delight, the fine morning in which he planted it, the ſoft evenings in which he watered it, and the pleaſure he had in ſeeing it grow and flouriſh.

LETTER XIV.

THE day before yeſterday the phyſician came from the town to make a viſit to the ſteward's. He found me upon the floor playing with Charlotte's children; we were tickling one another, and romping, and making a great noiſe. The doctor is very formal and very ſolemn; adjuſts the plaits of his ruffles whilſt he is diſcourſing with you, and draws his chitterling up to his chin. He thought this conduct of mine very much beneath the dignity of man: I perceived it by his

countenance; but I nevertheleſs continued to rebuild the houſes of cards which the children had blown down. He told every body, when he went back, that the ſteward's children were ſpoilt enough before, but that now Werter entirely ruined them.

Nothing touches me more than children, my dear friend, when I conſider them, and obſerve in the little beings the ſeeds of all thoſe virtues and qualities which will one day be ſo neceſſary to them; when I ſee in the obſtinate, all the future firmneſs and conſtancy of a great and noble character; in the capricious, that levity and gaiety of temper which will make them lightly paſs over the dangers and ſorrows of life; and when I ſee them all openneſs and ſimplicity, then I call to mind the divine words of our teacher, "If you do not become like one of theſe—" And theſe children who are our equals, and whom we ought to look upon as our models, we treat them like ſubjects; they

they are to have no will of their own.— Have we then none ourſelves? and whence comes this excluſive right? Is it becauſe we are older and more experienced? Great God! from the height of thy glory thou beholdeſt great children and little children (there are no other) and thou haſt long ſince declared to which thou giveſt the preference! But it has alſo been long ſince declared, that they believe in him, and do not hear him; and their children are after their own image, *&c.*

Adieu, my dear friend: I will not bewilder myſelf upon this ſubject any longer.

LETTER XV.

July 1.

CHarlotte will ſpend ſome time in the town: ſhe is with a very deſerving woman, who has been given over by her phyſicians,

phyſicians, and who wiſhed to have Charlotte with her in her laſt moments. What conſolation ſhe is capable of giving to the ſick, I have myſelf experienced, for my heart is much diſeaſed. I went with her laſt week to ſee the vicar of S—; a ſmall village in the mountains, about a league from hence. We got there about four o'clock; Charlotte's little ſiſter went with us. When we came into the court, which is ſhaded by two fine walnut-trees, the good old man was ſitting upon his bench. At ſight of Charlotte, he forgot his old age and his oaken ſtick, and ventured to walk towards her. She ran to him, and made him ſit down again, ſat down by him, preſented a thouſand compliments to him from her father, and played with the youngeſt of his children, the amuſement of his old age, though it was rather dirty and diſagreeable. I wiſh you could have ſeen her attention to this good old man; I wiſh you could have heard her raiſing her voice becauſe he is a little deaf, and telling him

him of young and healthy people who had died when it leaſt could have been expected; commending the virtues of the Carelſtad waters, and approving his intention of going thither the next ſummer; and aſſuring him ſhe thought he looked better than he did the laſt time ſhe ſaw him. During this time I paid my compliments and talked to his wife. The old man ſeemed quite in ſpirits; and as I could not help admiring the beauty of his walnut-trees, which formed ſuch an agreeable ſhade over our heads, he began to give us the hiſtory of them: "As to the oldeſt," ſaid he, "we don't know who planted it; ſome ſay one clergyman, and ſome ſay another; as to the youngeſt, it is exactly the age of my wife; it will be fifty years old next October; her father planted it in the morning, and towards evening ſhe came into the world. My wife's father was my predeceſſor here, and I cannot expreſs to you how fond he was of this tree; it is certainly not leſs dear to me. Upon a log

of wood, under this ſame tree, my wife was ſitting and knitting when I came into this court the firſt time, five and twenty years ago." Charlotte enquired after his daughter: he ſaid ſhe was gone with Mr. Smith into the meadows to ſee the hay-making. He then reſumed his hiſtory, and told us how he got into the good graces of his predeceſſor, and of his daughter; how he became firſt his curate and then his ſucceſſor; and he had ſcarcely finiſhed his ſtory, when his daughter returned with Mr. S. and affectionately ſaluted Charlotte. She has a clear brown complexion, is well made, lively, and a ſenſible worthy man might paſs his time very happily with her in the country. Her lover, for ſuch Mr. Smith immediately appeared to be, has an agreeable perſon, but was very reſerved, and would not join in the converſation, notwithſtanding all the endeavours of Charlotte for that purpoſe. I was uneaſy at it, becauſe I perceived by his countenance that it was not

for want of talents, but from caprice and ill-humour. It was but too evident afterwards, when we went to take a walk; for whilſt I was talking and laughing with the vicar's daughter, the countenance of this gentleman, which before was none of the pleaſanteſt, became ſo dark and angry, that Charlotte pulled me by the ſleeve to make me deſiſt. Nothing concerns me more than to ſee men torment one another; particularly when in the flower of their age, in the very ſeaſon of pleaſure, they waſte their few ſhort days of ſunſhine in quarrels and diſputes, and only feel their error when it is too late to repair it. This dwelt upon my mind; and during our collation, the converſation turning upon the happineſs and miſery of this life, I could not help taking that opportunity to inveigh bitterly againſt ill-humour. "We are apt," ſaid I, "to complain that we have but few happy days; and it appears to me that we have very little right to complain. If our hearts were always

in a proper diſpoſition to receive the good things which Heaven ſends us, we ſhould acquire ſtrength to ſupport the evil when they came upon us." "But," ſays the vicar's wife, "we cannot always command our tempers; ſo much depends on the conſtitution; when the body is ill at eaſe, the mind is ſo likewiſe." "Well, let us look upon this diſpoſition as a diſeaſe," I anſwered, "and ſee if there is no remedy for it." "That is more to the purpoſe," ſaid Charlotte; "and I think, indeed, a great deal might be done in this reſpect. I know, for example, that when any thing diſturbs my temper, I go into the garden, I ſing a lively air, and it vaniſhes." "That is what I meant," I replied; "ill-humour may be compared to ſloth. It is natural to man to be indolent; but if once we get the better of our indolence, we then go on with alacrity, and find a real pleaſure in being active." The daughter liſtened to me with attention. The young man objected, that we were not

not maſters of ourſelves, and ſtill leſs of our feelings. I told him, that it was a diſagreeable ſenſation which was in queſtion, and one that every body wiſhed to get rid of; that we don't know how far our ſtrength will go, till we have tried it; that the ſick conſult phyſicians, and ſubmit to the moſt ſcrupulous regimen, and the moſt nauſeous medicines, to recover their health. I then perceived that the good old man inclined his head to liſten to our diſcourſe. I therefore raiſed my voice, and addreſſing myſelf to him, ſaid; "There has been a great deal of preaching againſt all crimes, Sir; but I don't know that any body has hitherto preached againſt the ſpleen." "It is for thoſe who preach in towns," ſaid he, "to diſcourſe on that ſubject, for peaſants don't know what the ſpleen is; though indeed it would not be amiſs to do it here from time to time, if it was only for my wife and the ſteward." We all laughed, and ſo did he very heartily; but it gave him a fit of coughing,

which interrupted us for ſome time. Mr. Smith reſumed the ſubject. "You have made this indiſpoſition of temper a crime," ſaid he; "that appears to me to be carrying the matter too far." "It is not, though," I anſwered, "if what is pernicious to ourſelves, and to others, deſerves the name of crime. Is it not enough that we are without the power to make one another happy, but muſt we deprive each other of that ſatisfaction, which, left to ourſelves, we might often be capable of enjoying? Shew me the man who has ill-humour, and who hides it; who bears the whole burthen of it himſelf, without interrupting the pleaſures of thoſe about him! No; ill-humour ariſes from a conſciouſneſs of our own want of merit; from a diſcontent which always accompanies that envy which fooliſh vanity engenders. We diſlike to ſee people happy; unleſs their happineſs is the work of our own hands." Charlotte looked at me, and ſmiled at the heat with which I ſpoke; and ſome tears

which

which I perceived in the eyes of the young woman, inclined me to continue. "Woe unto thoſe," I ſaid, "who make uſe of their power over a human heart, to deprive it of the ſimple pleaſure it would naturally enjoy. All the favours, all the attention in the world, cannot for a moment make amends for the loſs of that happineſs which a cruel tyranny deſtroys."

My heart was full; ſome recollections preſſed upon my mind, and my eyes were filled with tears.

"We ſhould ſay to ourſelves every day," I exclaimed, "what good can I do to my friends? I can only endeavour not to interrupt them in their pleaſures, and try to augment the happineſs which I myſelf partake of. When their ſouls are tormented by a violent paſſion, when their hearts are rent with grief, I cannot give them relief for a moment.

"And when at length a fatal malady ſeizes the unhappy being whoſe untimely

grave was prepared by thy hand—when ſtretched out and exhauſted, he raiſes his dim eyes to heaven, and the damps of death are on his brow—then thou ſtandeſt before him like a condemned criminal; thou ſeeſt thy fault, but 'tis too late; thou feeleſt thy want of power; thou feeleſt, with bitterneſs, that all thou canſt give, all thou canſt do, will not reſtore the ſtrength of thy unfortunate victim, nor procure for him a moment of conſolation!"

In pronouncing theſe words, the remembrance of a like ſcene, at which I had been preſent, came with all its weight upon my heart, I put my handkerchief to my eyes, I got up and left the company. The voice of Charlotte, who called me to go home, made me recollect myſelf; and in our way back, with what tenderneſs ſhe chid me! how kindly ſhe repreſented to me, that the too eager intereſt, and the heat with which I entered into every thing, would wear me out, and ſhorten my days!

—Yes,

—Yes, my angel, I will take care of myſelf; I will live for you.

LETTER XVI.

July 6.

CHarlotte is ſtill with her dying friend; and is ſtill the ſame, ſtill the ſame kind attentive creature, who ſoftens pain, and gives happineſs whichever way ſhe turns. She went out yeſterday with her little ſiſters; I knew it, and went to meet her, and we walked together. In coming back towards the town, we ſtopped at the ſpring I am ſo fond of, and which is become a thouſand times dearer to me now that Charlotte has ſat by the ſide of it. I looked around me, and recalled the time I had paſſed there, when my heart was unoccupied and alone. "Dear ſpring," ſaid I, "I have not ſince that time enjoyed cool repoſe by your freſh

freſh ſtream; and often paſſing haſtily by, I have not even ſeen you." I fixed my eyes upon Charlotte, and was ſtruck with a lively ſenſe of all that I poſſeſs in her.

LETTER XVII.

July 8.

HOW can I be ſo childiſh? I depend on every turn and change of countenance. How can I be ſo childiſh? —We have been at Walheim: the ladies went in a carriage, but got out to walk. Whilſt we were walking, I thought the eyes of Charlotte—but I was miſtaken—However, I will tell you in two words, for I am now dying with ſleep. When the ladies got into their coach again, young W. Selftadt, Andran, and myſelf, were talking to them at the window; the young men were gay, and full of ſpirits; I watched

ed Charlotte's eyes; they wandered from one to the other, but did not light on me; upon me, who ſtood there motionleſs, and who ſaw nothing but her. My heart was bidding her adieu a thouſand and a thouſand times, and ſhe did not even look at me. The coach drove off, and a tear was ready to ſtart. I followed her with my eyes; I ſaw her put her head out of the window. Alas! was it for me that ſhe looked out? I know not; and uncertainty is my comfort perhaps.—Good night.—I ſee my own weakneſs.

LETTER XVIII.

July 10.

YOU ſhould ſee how fooliſh I look in company when her name is mentioned, when any body talks of her, particularly when they aſk me how I like her?—How I *like* her! I deteſt the phraſe.

What

What muſt the man be who *liked* Charlotte, whoſe heart and ſenſes were not totally captivated by her?—How I *like* her!—A little while ago, I was aſked how I *liked* Oſſian.

LETTER XIX.

July 13.

NO, I am not miſtaken—I read in her eyes that ſhe is intereſted for me; I feel it. And I may believe my own heart, which tells me that ſhe—dare I ſay it?—Can I pronounce the divine words?—ſhe loves me.

That ſhe loves me! Oh! how the idea exalts me in my own eyes! How—I may tell you, for you are capable of underſtanding it—How I honour myſelf ſince I have been beloved by her! Is it preſumption, or is it a conſciouſneſs of the truth? I do not know a man who is capable of

ſupplanting

ſupplanting me in the heart of Charlotte: —And yet when ſhe ſpeaks of Albert with warmth, with tenderneſs, I feel like an ambitious courtier, who is deprived of his honours and his titles; or the ſoldier whoſe ſword is taken from him by his prince.

LETTER XX.

July 16.

HOW my heart beats, and my blood boils in my veins, when by accident I touch her finger!—when my feet meet hers under the table, I draw them back with precipitation as from a furnace; but a ſecret power again preſſes me forward, and diſorders all my ſenſes.

Her innocent and eaſy heart does not know, that all theſe little marks of confidence and friendſhip make my torment. When ſhe puts her hand upon mine, when in

in the eagerneſs of converſation ſhe comes cloſe to me, and her balmy breath reaches my lips, the ſudden effect of lightning is not ſtronger. Ah! this celeſtial confidence!—if ever I ſhould dare—you underſtand me, my dear friend:—my heart is not ſo corrupt; it is weak, very weak; and is not that a degree of corruption?

I look upon her as ſacred, and in her preſence I deſire nothing; when I am near her I am all ſoul. There is a favourite air of hers, which ſhe plays on the harpſicord with the energy of an angel; it is ſtriking, touching, and yet ſimple. As ſoon as ſhe begins it, care, ſorrow, pain, all is forgotten. I believe I perfectly comprehend all that is related of the magic of ancient muſic. At times when I am ready to ſhoot myſelf, ſhe plays that air, and the darkneſs which hung over me is diſperſed, and I breathe freely again.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

July 18.

WHAT is the whole world to our hearts without love? It is the optic machine of the Savoyards without light. As ſoon as the little lamp appears, the figures ſhine on the whitened wall; and if love only ſhews us ſhadows which paſs away, yet ſtill we are happy, when, like children, we are tranſported with the ſplendid phantoms.

I ſhall not ſee Charlotte to-day; company, which I could not avoid, hinders me. What do you think I have done? I ſent the little boy who waits upon me, that I might at leaſt ſee ſomebody that had been near her. With what impatience I waited for his return, and with what pleaſure I ſaw him! I ſhould certainly have taken him in my arms if I had not been aſhamed.

The Bologna ſtone, when placed in the ſun,

ſun attracts the rays, and retains them ſo as to give light a conſiderable time after it is removed into the dark. The boy was juſt this to me. The idea that Charlotte's eyes had dwelt on his features, the buttons of his coat, the cape, made all of them ſo intereſting, ſo dear to me—I would not at that moment have taken a thouſand crowns for him, I was ſo happy to ſee him! Beware of laughing at me, my good friend: nothing which makes us happy is an illuſion.

LETTER XXII.

July 19.

AS ſoon as I opened my window this morning, I ſaid, "To-day I ſhall ſee her," and I calmly looked at the ſun. I ſhall ſee her, and I have no other wiſh to form for the whole day: all, all is included in that thought.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

July 20.

I Cannot yet approve the ſcheme you have of ſending me to the ambaſſador of —— at ——. I don't love ſubordination, and we all know too that he is a hard diſagreeable man to have any connection with. You ſay my mother wiſhes to have me employed. I could not help laughing at that.—Am I not employed enough? and if it is in ſhelling peaſe and beans, it is in fact the ſame. In this world, all is miſery; and thoſe who, in compliance with others, are endeavouring to acquire riches or honours, are, in my opinion, madmen.

LETTER XXIV.

July 24.

SINCE you are ſo much intereſted about my progreſs in drawing, I am ſorry to tell you, that I have hitherto done very little in that way. I never was in a happier diſpoſition; I never underſtood Nature better; I never was more ſenſible of the ſublime parts of it, nor entered more minutely into its details; and yet I don't know how to expreſs the ſtate in which I am: my executive powers fail me; every thing ſwims and dances before me, and I cannot make an outline. I think I ſhould ſucceed better in relief, if I was to uſe clay or wax: I ſhall try, if this laſts any longer. Three times I have begun Charlotte's picture, and three times have diſhonoured my pencil. I don't know how it is; not long ago I was very happy in taking likeneſſes: I have made

a ſhadow of her, and I muſt content myſelf with that.

LETTER XXV.

July 27.

I HAVE very often reſolved not to ſee her ſo often. It is more eaſy to talk than to act. Every day I yield to the temptation; and when I return at night, I ſay I won't go on the morrow; but on the morrow I find myſelf with her again, and don't know how it has happened. Don't imagine, however, that good reaſons are always wanting. One evening ſhe ſaid, "You'll come again to-morrow:" I could not then avoïd going. Another day, the weather is ſo fine I muſt walk.—I walk to Walheim; when I am there, it is but half a league farther. My grandmother uſed to tell us a ſtory of a

mountain of load-ſtone: When any veſſels came near it, the nails flew to the mountain, and the unhappy crew periſhed amidſt the disjointed planks.

LETTER XXVI.

ALBERT is arrived. Were he the beſt and moſt perfect of men, were I in every reſpect his inferior, it would not be leſs inſupportable to me to ſee him in poſſeſſion of ſo many charms, ſo many perfections. I have ſeen him, my dear friend; I have ſeen this happy huſband; he is a well-bred worthy man, whom one cannot help liking. Happily for me I was not at the firſt meeting; my heart would have been torn to pieces; and he has been ſo kind as not to give Charlotte a ſingle kiſs before me. Heaven reward him for it! The eſteem he has for this

charming girl muſt make me love him. He ſhews a regard for me; I am certainly indebted to Charlotte for it. Women always endeavour to keep up a good underſtanding between their friends: it don't often ſucceed; when it does, they only are the gainers by it. Serioufly, I cannot help eſteeming Albert. The coolneſs and calmneſs of his temper form a ſtriking contraſt with the impetuoſity of mine; and yet he has a great deal of feeling, and knows the value of that happineſs which he poſſeſſes. He ſeems very little ſubject to ill-humour; which, you know, of all faults, is the one I am leaſt inclined to excuſe.

He looks upon me as a man of underſtanding and taſte. My attachment to Charlotte, the lively intereſt I ſhew for every thing that relates to her, augment his triumph and his love. I will not enquire whether he may not, in private, ſometimes teaze her with little jealouſies; in his place, at leaſt, I know I ſhould not

be quite eaſy. Be that as it will, the pleaſure I enjoyed with Charlotte is at an end. Shall I call it folly or blindneſs?—But it wants no name—the thing ſpeaks for itſelf. Before Albert came, I knew all that I now know; I knew I could have no pretenſions to her, and I did not claim any; and now here I am, like an idiot, ſtaring with aſtoniſhment, becauſe another comes and takes her from me. I gnaſh my teeth, I bite my lips, I hate and deſpiſe myſelf: but I ſhould deſpiſe the man ſtill more, who could tell me coldly, that I muſt reconcile myſelf to it, for it could not be otherwiſe. Let me eſcape from all ſuch ſilly perſonages!—Yeſterday, after having rambled a long time in the woods, I returned to Charlotte's houſe. I found her ſitting with Albert under an arbour. Not knowing what to do, I played the fool, and was guilty of a thouſand extravagancies. "For heaven's ſake," ſaid Charlotte to-day, "let me beg of you that we may have no more ſcenes like that of

of laſt night; you are quite alarming in your violent ſpirits." Between ourſelves, I have taken to watch Albert; and when he is engaged I run there, and am always pleaſed when I find her alone.

LETTER XXVII.

Auguſt 8.

BELIEVE me, my dear friend, when I talked of the people who might adviſe me to reconcile myſelf to this event, and ſaid, "Away with ſuch adviſers!" I was very far from thinking you could poſſibly be one of them: but, in fact, you are in the right. I will only make one objection. Of two oppoſite methods which are propoſed, one ſeldom takes either. There are as many various lines of conduct and opinion, as there are turns of feature between an aquiline noſe and a flat one.

Give me leave then to grant all your concluſions, and contrive a middle way for myſelf, to ſlip between them.

You ſay to me, that I either have hopes of obtaining Charlotte, or that I have not. In the firſt caſe, I ought to follow my point, and preſs forward to the accompliſhment of my wiſhes: In the ſecond caſe, you tell me to act as a man, and throw aſide the unfortunate affection, which will conſume all my ſtrength. This is very juſtly ſaid, my dear friend, and very eaſy too to ſay.

Would you require of a feeble man, oppreſſed by a low and languid diſeaſe, which is wearing out his conſtitution by degrees, that he ſhould put an end to his miſeries by a piſtol or dagger? Does not the ſame diſeaſe, which is conſuming his life, at the ſame time deprive him of the reſolution to put an end to it?

You might, in return, ſend me a ſimile of the ſame kind.—Who would not have an arm cut off, rather than riſk his life by deferring

deferring the operation? Perhaps many would.—But let us leave theſe compariſons.

There are times in which I have reſolution, and ſhould perhaps go away, if I knew where to go.

LETTER XXVIII.

Auguſt 10.

IF I were not deprived of all underſtanding, I might lead the happieſt life in the world here; ſo many agreeable circumſtances, and of a kind to make a worthy man happy, are ſeldom united. Alas! I feel it but too ſenſibly! happineſs depends ſolely on the mind! To be conſidered as making part of the moſt amiable family in the world, to be beloved by the father as a ſon, by the children as a father, and by Charlotte—and this worthy Albert, who

who does not interrupt my happineſs by any ſtroke of ill-humour, who ſalutes me cordially, and prefers me to every thing but Charlotte! My dear friend, you would like to hear us, when we talk together, and talk of Charlotte. In fact, nothing can be more ridiculous than our connection, and yet I am frequently ſoftened even to tears. When he talks to me of Charlotte's moſt reſpectable mother; when he deſcribes to me her laſt moments, and the affecting ſcene in which ſhe gave up to her daughter the care of her children and family; when he tells me how Charlotte immediately aſſumed another character; what a ſkilful œconomiſt, and an active houſewife ſhe became, and what a tender mother; every day diſplaying all theſe qualities, and yet preſerving her agreeable chearfulneſs and vivacity; I walk by the ſide of him, pick up flowers by the way, with great attention make a noſegay, and—throw it into the firſt brook I come to, and watch it as it glides gently down. I don't recollect whether

whether I told you that Albert is to ſettle here. He is much eſteemed at court, and has obtained a place which brings him in a good income. I have ſeen few men ſo punctual and methodical in buſineſs.

LETTER XXIX.

Auguſt 12.

ALBERT is certainly one of the beſt men in the world. I had a very ſingular converſation with him yeſterday, which I muſt relate to you. I went to take leave of him; for I took it into my head to ſpend a few days in the mountains, from whence I now write to you. As I was walking up and down his room, I obſerved his piſtols. I aſked him to lend them to me for my journey. "They are at your ſervice," ſaid he, "if you will take the trouble of loading them, for I only

I only keep them there for form." I took one up, and he continued: "Ever ſince I had like to have ſuffered for my precaution, I have left off keeping loaded fire-arms." I deſired him to tell me what the accident was. "I was with a friend in the country," he ſaid; "my piſtols were not loaded, and I ſlept with perfect tranquillity: but one rainy afternoon, when I was ſitting and doing nothing, it came into my head, I don't know how, that the houſe might be attacked, and that theſe piſtols might be of uſe, and that we might —in ſhort, you know how one goes on when one has nothing better to do. I gave my piſtols to my ſervant to clean and load. He was playing with the maid and trying to frighten her; and, God knows how, the piſtol went off: the rammer was in; it went againſt the girl's hand, and tore off her thumb. You may imagine the lamentations and noiſe we had; and moreover a ſurgeon's bill to pay. Since that accident my piſtols have remained

mained as you ſee them. What, indeed, is the uſe of precaution? we cannot, my dear friend, foreſee the dangers which threaten us." Do you know, I like every thing in this man, except his *indeeds*; and every rule has an exception. But he is ſo correct in his behaviour, of ſuch perfect veracity, that if he thinks he has riſked any thing, or been too general, or not ſtrictly true, he never ceaſes to moderate, and qualify, and extenuate, till at length it appears that he has ſaid nothing at all. Albert now, according to cuſtom, was immerſed in his text: I ceaſed to hear him, and was loſt in reveries. In theſe reveries, I put the mouth of the piſtol to my forehead. "What do you mean," cried Albert, turning back the piſtol. "It is not charged," ſaid I. "And if it is not," he anſwered with impatience, "what do you mean by it? I cannot comprehend how a man ſhould be ſo mad as to blow out his brains; and the bare idea of it ſhocks me." "What right has any man," ſaid I,

"in

" in ſpeaking of an action, immediately to pronounce that it is mad, or wiſe, or good, or bad? What is meant by all this? Have you carefully examined the interior motives for the action? Have you fairly unfolded all the reaſons which gave riſe to it, and which made it neceſſary? If you did all this, you would not be ſo quick with your deciſion." " However," ſaid Albert, " you will allow that ſome actions are criminal, whatever were the motives for committing them."—I granted it, and ſhrugged up my ſhoulders.

" But ſtill, my good friend," I ſaid, " there are more exceptions to make. Theft is a crime: but the man who is driven to it by extreme poverty, with no deſign but to ſave himſelf and his family from periſhing for want, muſt he too be puniſhed? and is he not rather an object of our compaſſion? Who ſhall throw the firſt ſtone at a huſband that, in the firſt heat of juſt reſentment, ſacrifices a faithleſs wife, and her perfidious ſeducer? or

at

at a young girl whom love only has led aſtray? Even our laws, our pedantic laws, our cold, cruel laws, relent and withdraw their puniſhment."

"Theſe examples are very different," ſaid Albert; "becauſe a man, under the influence of violent paſſion, is incapable of reflection, and is looked upon as drunk, or out of his ſenſes." "Oh! you people of ſound underſtandings," I replied, ſmiling, "are very ready to pronounce ſentence, and talk of extravagance, and madneſs, and intoxication; you are quiet, and care for nothing; you avoid the drunken man, and deteſt the extravagant; you paſs on the other ſide like the Prieſt, and like the Phariſee you thank God that you are not like one of them. I have more than once experienced the effects of drinking; my paſſions have always bordered upon extravagance, and I am not aſhamed to own it. Do I not find that thoſe ſuperior men, who have done any great or extraordinary action,

action, have in all times been treated as if they were intoxicated or mad?

"And in private life too, is it not inſufferable, that if a young man does any thing uncommonly noble or generous, the world immediately ſays he is out of his ſenſes? Take ſhame to yourſelves, ye people of diſcretion; take ſhame to yourſelves, ye ſages of the earth."—"This now is one of your extravagant flights," ſaid Albert; "you always go beyond the mark: and here you are moſt undoubtedly wrong, to compare ſuicide, which is in queſtion, with great actions; for it can only be looked upon as a weakneſs. It is much eaſier to die than to bear a life of miſery with fortitude."

I was upon the point of breaking off the converſation immediately; for nothing puts me out of all patience, like a common-place opinion, which means nothing, whilſt I am talking from my inmoſt heart. However, I got the better of myſelf; for having often heard this pitiful argument,

I now

I now begin to be uſed to it. But I anſwered with ſome warmth, "You call this a weakneſs; beware of being carried away by ſounds! Suppoſe a people groaning under the yoke of tyranny; do you call them weak, when at length they throw it off and break their chains? The man who, to reſcue his houſe from the flames, exerts all his powers, lifts burthens with eaſe that he could ſcarcely move when his mind was at peace; he who attacks and puts to flight half a ſcore of his enemies; are theſe weak people? My good friend, if reſiſtance is a mark of ſtrength, can the higheſt degree of reſiſtance be called a weakneſs? Albert looked ſtedfaſtly at me, and ſaid, "Begging your pardon, I don't think the examples you have brought have any relation to the ſubject in queſtion." "That may very likely be," I anſwered, "for I have been often told, that my way of combining things appeared extravagant. But let us try to ſet the matter in another light; let us examine

what is the ſituation of a man who reſolves to free himſelf from the burthen of life—a burthen that is in general ſo much deſired—and let us enter into his feelings; for we cannot otherwiſe reaſon fairly on the ſubject.

"Human nature," I continued, "has certain limits; there is a degree of joy, grief, pain, which it is able to endure, and beyond that degree it is annihilated.

"We are not, therefore, to enquire whether a man is weak or ſtrong, but whether he can paſs the bounds of nature, and the meaſure of his ſufferings, either of mind or body; and I think it is as abſurd to ſay that a man who deſtroys himſelf is a coward, as to call a man a coward who dies of a malignant fever." "Paradox, all paradox!" exclaimed Albert. "Not ſo paradoxical as you imagine," I replied; "you will allow that we call a diſeaſe mortal, in which nature is ſo ſeverely attacked, and her ſtrength ſo far exhauſted,

hauſted, that what remains is not ſufficient to raiſe her up, and ſet her going again.

"Let us apply this to the mind; let us ſee how ideas work, and how impreſſions fix upon it, till at length a violent paſſion takes entire poſſeſſion, deſtroys all the powers it poſſeſſed when at eaſe, and entirely ſubdues it.

"It is in vain that a man of ſound underſtanding and cool temper ſees the miſerable ſituation of a wretch in ſuch circumſtances; it is in vain that he counſels him: 'tis like the man in health, who ſits by the bed of his dying friend, but is unable to communicate to him the ſmalleſt portion of his ſtrength."

Albert thought this too general. I quoted the girl who lately drowned herſelf, and made him recollect her ſtory—"A good young creature, ſo accuſtomed to the narrow ſphere of domeſtic labour, and the buſineſs of the week, that ſhe knew of no pleaſure but taking a walk in the fields on a Sunday, dancing once per-

haps in the holidays, and the reſt of her time only talking with her next neighbour of the news and little quarrels of the village. At length her heart feels new and unknown wiſhes; all that uſed to pleaſe her, now by degrees becomes taſteleſs, till ſhe meets with a man to whom a new affection inviſibly attaches her; from that time, her hopes are all centered in him; the whole ſurrounding world is forgotten by her; ſhe ſees, hears, deſires nothing but him; he alone occupies all her thoughts. Her heart having never felt the baneful pleaſure ariſing from light vanity, her wiſhes tend immediately to the object of them; ſhe hopes to belong to him, and in eternal bonds expects to enjoy all the deſires of her heart, and to realize the ideas of happineſs which ſhe has formed. His repeated promiſes confirm her hopes; his fondneſs encreaſes her paſſion; her whole ſoul is loſt and drowned in pleaſure; her heart is all rapture: At length ſhe ſtretches out her arms to embrace the

object

object of her vows—All is vaniſhed away; her lover forſakes her.—Amazed! petrified! ſhe ſtands ſenſeleſs before the abyſs of miſery ſhe ſees encompaſs her; all around is darkneſs; for her there is no proſpect, nor hope, nor conſolation: ſhe is forſaken by him in whom her life was bound up; and in the wide univerſe which is before her, and among ſo many who might repair her loſs, ſhe feels alone, and abandoned by the whole world. Thus blinded, thus impelled, by the piercing grief which wrings her heart, ſhe plunges into the deep to put an end to her torments. Such, Albert, is the hiſtory of many men: And is it not a parallel caſe with illneſs? Nature has no way to eſcape: her powers exhauſted, and contending powers to ſtruggle with, death muſt be the conſequence. Woe unto the man who could hear this ſituation deſcribed, and who could ſay, "A fooliſh girl! why did not ſhe wait till time had worn off the impreſſion? her deſpair would have

been ſoftened, and ſhe would have found another lover to comfort her." One might as well ſay, "A fool! he died of a fever: why did not he wait till he had recovered his ſtrength, till his blood was calm? then all would have been well, and he would have been alive now."

Albert, who did not allow the compariſon to be juſt, made many objections: amongſt the reſt, that I had only brought the example of a ſimple and ignorant girl;—but he could not comprehend how a man of ſenſe, whoſe views are more enlarged, and who ſees ſuch various conſolations, ſhould ever ſuffer himſelf to fall into ſuch a ſtate of deſpair. "My good friend," ſaid I, "whatever is the education of a man, whatever is his underſtanding, ſtill he is a man, and the little reaſon that he poſſeſſes, either does not act at all, or acts very feebly, when the paſſions are let looſe, or rather when the boundaries of human nature cloſe in upon him.—But we will talk of this another time," I ſaid,

ſaid, and took up my hat—Alas! my heart was full—and we parted without conviction on either ſide.—How rarely do men underſtand one another!

LETTER XXX.

Auguſt 15.

IT is moſt certain that what renders one man neceſſary to another, is a ſimilarity of taſte and ſentiment. I ſee that Charlotte would not loſe me without regret; and as to the children, they every day aſk me to come again on the morrow. I went this afternoon to tune Charlotte's harpſicord: but I could not contrive to do it; all the children came about me, and aſked me to tell them a ſtory. Charlotte was deſirous that I ſhould pleaſe them, and I told my very beſt tale of the prince that was ſerved by dwarfs. I improve by this exerciſe

myſelf, I aſſure you, and am quite ſurpriſed at the impreſſion theſe ſtories make upon the children. If I invent an incident at any time, and afterwards omit it, the little arch rogues never fail to tell me, it was not ſo the firſt time; ſo that I now endeavour to relate with great exactneſs, and without any pauſes, and in a tone of voice that is almoſt recitative. I ſee by this how much an author hurts his works by altering them even for the better. The firſt impreſſion is readily received. A man will believe the incredible, it will be engraved on his memory; and woe unto thoſe who would afterwards endeavour to efface it.

LETTER XXXI.

WHAT conſtitutes the happineſs of man, muſt it then change and become the ſource of his miſery? That ardent

dent ſentiment which animated my heart with the love of nature, which poured in upon me a torrent of delight, which brought all paradiſe before me, is now become an inſupportable torrent, a demon which purſues and harraſſes me inceſſantly. In times paſt I contemplated, from the top of high rocks, the broad river which, far as eye can reach, waters this fertile plain. Every thing put forth and grew, and was expanded. Around me all was in motion. I ſaw theſe mountains covered to their ſummits with high and tufted trees, and the vallies in their various windings ſheltered by ſmiling woods; the peaceful ſtream gently glided through the trembling reeds, and in its calm ſurface reflected the light clouds, which a ſoft zephyr kept ſuſpended in the air. I heard the birds animating the woods with their ſong. Millions of inſects danced in the purple rays of the ſun. The arid rock afforded nouriſhment to the moſs; and the ſands below were covered with broom.

The

The vivifying heat which animates all nature, was every where diſplayed before my eyes; it filled and warmed my heart. I was loſt in the idea of infinity. Stupendous mountains encompaſſed me; precipices were before my feet; torrents fell by the ſide of me; impetuous rivers ran through the plain; rocks and mountains reſounded from afar; and in the depths of the earth I ſaw innumerable powers in motion, and multiplying to infinity. All the beings of the creation, of a thouſand tribes and a thouſand forms, move upon the earth and in the air; and man hides himſelf in his little hut, and ſays, "I am lord over this vaſt univerſe." Weak mortal! all things appear little to you, for you are little yourſelf. Craggy mountains, deſerts untrodden by the foot of man, even the unknown confines of the immenſe ocean, are animated by the breath of the Eternal, and every atom to which he has given exiſtence and life, finds favour in his ſight. Ah! how often at that time has the fligh

of

of a ſea-bird, which paſſed over my head, inſpired me with the deſire of being tranſported to the ſhore of the immeaſurable waters, there to drink the pleaſures of life as in a river, and to partake, if but for a moment, and with the confined powers of my ſoul, of the beatitude of the Creator, in whom we live, and move, and have our being!

My dear friend, the bare recollection of theſe times ſtill gives me pleaſure: the vehemence of mind with which I recall the ſenſations, which gives me faculties to expreſs them, raiſes me above myſelf, and makes me doubly feel my preſent anguiſh.

The curtain drops, the ſcene is changed; inſtead of proſpects of eternal life, a bottomleſs pit is for ever opened before me. Can we ſay of any thing, that it exiſts, when all paſſes away, when time in its rapid progreſs carries every thing with it, and our tranſitory exiſtence, hurried along by the torrent, is either ſwallowed up by the waves or daſhed againſt the rocks?

There

There is not a moment which does not prey upon me, and all around me; and every moment I am myſelf a deſtroyer. The moſt innocent walk deprives of life thouſands of poor inſects: one ſtep deſtroys the fabric of the induſtrious ant, and turns a little world into a chaos! No, 'tis not the great and uncommon calamities of the world, the floods which ſweep away whole villages, the earthquakes that ſwallow up our towns, which touch and affect me. What ſaps my heart, is that deſtroying, hidden power, which exiſts in every thing. Nature has formed nothing which does not conſume itſelf, and every thing that is near it: ſo that, ſurrounded by earth and air, and by all the active powers, I wander with an aching heart; and the univerſe to me is as a fearful monſter, which devours and regorges its food.

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

Auguſt 20.

IT is in vain that I ſtretch out my arms towards her, when I awake in the morning, after the ill-omened viſions of night; 'tis in vain that I ſeek her, when an innocent dream has happily deceived me, and placed me by her ſide in the fields; I held her hand, I covered it with kiſſes: Alas! when half aſleep, I ſtill think I touch her, and then I wake entirely—torrents of tears flow from my oppreſſed heart! and, bereaved of all comfort, I weep over the woes to come.

LETTER XXXIII.

Auguſt 22.

MY active ſpirits have degenerated into uneaſy indolence:—I cannot employ myſelf; I cannot be idle. I cannot

not think; I am no longer ſenſible of the beauties of nature, and books are diſtaſteful to me.—When we give ourſelves up, every thing fails us.—I wiſh ſometimes I was a mechanic; when I waked in the morning I ſhould have ſome purſuit, ſome hope, a taſk at leaſt for the day. I often envy Albert, when I ſee him buried in a heap of papers and parchments up to his eyes; and I ſay to myſelf, In his place I ſhould be happy.—I have more than once intended to write to you, and to the miniſter, for the employment which you think I might obtain. I believe myſelf I might have it: the miniſter has long ſhewn a regard for me, and has often told me that I ought to ſeek ſome employment. It is the buſineſs of an hour only: But when the fable recurs to me of the horſe, who, being weary of his liberty, ſuffered himſelf to be ſaddled and bridled, and then found reaſon to repent; I ſay, when this fable recurs to me, I don't know what to determine upon. Beſides, my dear friend,

this deſire to change my ſituation, is it not the conſequence of that reſtleſs, perturbed ſpirit, which would equally purſue me in every ſituation in life?

LETTER XXXIV.

Auguſt 28.

IF my ills could admit of any cure, they would certainly be cured here.—This is my birth-day—Very early in the morning I received a little parcel from Albert: Upon opening it, I found one of the knots which Charlotte had on her ſleeve the firſt time I ſaw her, and which I had ſeveral times aſked her to give me. Albert had added two volumes in 12mo. of Wetſtein's Homer, which I had wanted for ſome time, the Erneſti edition being inconvenient to carry with me when I walked out. You ſee how they prevent my wiſhes, how well they underſtand all thoſe little

little attentions of friendſhip, ſo ſuperior to the magnificent preſents of the great, which are humiliating. I kiſſed the ſleeve-knot a thouſand times, and every time I breathed delight from the memory of happy days—days which will never return. Such, my friend, is our fate—I do not murmur at it.—The flowers of life do but juſt ſhow themſelves.—How many paſs away, and leave no trace behind! how few are ſucceeded by fruit, and the fruit how rarely does it ripen!—Alas! is it not ſtrange, my dear friend, that we ſhould ſuffer to periſh and to decay, the little which remains and ripens?—Adieu!

It is the fineſt weather in the world.—In Charlotte's orchard I often climb into a tree, and chooſe pears for her; ſhe ſtands under it, and takes them from me as I gather them.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

August 30.

WRETCH that I am, do I not take pleaſure in deceiving myſelf, and am I not without underſtanding?—What will become of this ardent and unbounded paſſion?—I addreſs no prayers but to Charlotte; my imagination ſees nothing but her; all that ſurrounds me is of no account, but as it relates to her.—And in this ſtate I enjoy ſome happy hours, till I am obliged to tear myſelf from her: and to that, alas! my heart often forces me. When I have been ſitting by her for two or three hours, quite abſorbed by her figure, her attitudes, her divine expreſſions, the ſentiment by degrees takes poſſeſſion of me, and is worked up to the higheſt exceſs: my ſight is confuſed; my breathing is oppreſſed; I hear nothing; my veins ſwell; a palpitation ſeizes my heart, and I ſcarcely know where I am, or whe-

ther I exiſt. Then, if ſoft ſenſations do not prevail, as it ſometimes happens,—if Charlotte does not at leaſt allow me the melancholy conſolation to bathe her hand with my tears, I am obliged to leave her, and run and wander about the country. I climb ſteep rocks; I break my way through copſes, amongſt thorns and briars which tear me to pieces, and I feel a little relief. Sometimes I lie ſtretched on the ground, overcome with fatigue, and dying with thirſt: ſometimes, late in the night, when the moon ſhines upon my head, I lean againſt a bending tree in ſome ſequeſtered foreſt, to eaſe my wrung feet; and, quite worn out and exhauſted, I ſleep till break of day. Oh, my friend! the diſmal cell, the ſackcloth, the girdle with ſharp points of iron, would be indulgence and luxury in compariſon of what I now ſuffer.—Adieu.—I ſee no end to theſe torments but the grave.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

September 2.

I Will go.—My dear friend, I thank you; I was in doubt, and you determine me. I have reſolved to leave her this fortnight;—it muſt be ſo.—She is returned to the town, and is at the houſe of a friend; and Albert—and—I will go from hence.

LETTER XXXVII.

September 3.

WHAT a night! I can henceforth bear any thing. My friend, I ſhall ſee her no more. Ah! why cannot I fall on your neck, and with floods of tears expreſs all the paſſions which tear my heart? I am ſitting down, and trying to breathe

freely, and doing all that is in my power to compoſe my mind;—I am waiting for day-light and the poſt-horſes. Charlotte is at reſt; ſhe does not know that ſhe will ſee me no more. I tore myſelf away; and had the reſolution not to betray my intention during a converſation which laſted two hours.—Great God! ſuch a converſation!

Albert promiſed me to come with Charlotte into the garden immediately after ſupper. I was upon the terrace, under the thick cheſnut-trees, and ſaw the ſetting ſun; my eyes for the laſt time ſaw him ſink beneath this delightful valley and ſilent ſtream. I had often been upon the ſame ſpot with Charlotte, and ſeen the ſame glorious ſight, and now—I walked up and down this walk, ſo dear to me: a ſecret ſympathy had often detained me there before I knew Charlotte; and we were pleaſed when, early in our acquaintance, we found we had both had the ſame predilection for this place. Under the

cheſnut-trees there is an extenſive view—But I remember that I mentioned this to you before in a letter, and deſcribed how high copſes incloſe the end of it; how the walk through the wood becomes darker and darker, till it ends in a receſs, formed by the thickeſt trees, and which has all the charms of gloomy ſolitude. I ſtill remember the tender melancholy which came over my heart the firſt time I entered this ſilent deep retreat. I had certainly a ſecret foreboding, that it would one day be the ſcene of my happineſs and of my torment.

After I had ſpent half an hour in the oppoſite ideas of going away and returning again, I heard them come up the terrace. I flew to meet them, and ſhuddering, I took Charlotte's hand, and kiſſed it. Juſt as we reached the top of the terrace, the moon appeared behind a hill covered with wood. Converſing on various ſubjects, we came to the dark receſs: Charlotte went in and ſat down; Albert ſat

down by her ſide; I did the ſame.—But my agitation did not ſuffer me to remain long ſeated: I got up and ſtood before her, walked backwards and forwards, ſat down again;—it was a ſtate of violent emotions.

Charlotte made us obſerve a fine effect of moon-light at the end of the wood, which appeared the more ſtriking and brilliant from the darkneſs which ſurrounded the ſpot where we were. We remained for ſome time ſilent; and then Charlotte ſaid, "Whenever I walk by moon-light, it brings to my remembrance all thoſe who were dear to me, and who are no more; and I think of death and a future ſtate.—Yes," continues ſhe, with a firm but touching voice, "we ſhall ſtill exiſt; but, Werter, ſhall we find one another out? Shall we know one another again? What preſages have you? What is your opinion?"

"Charlotte," I ſaid, holding out my hand to her, and my eyes full of tears,

" we ſhall again ſee one another here and hereafter." I could ſay no more.—My dear friend, ſhould ſhe have put the queſtion to me, juſt when the thoughts of a cruel ſeparation filled my heart?

" And thoſe perſons who have been dear to us," ſaid ſhe, " and who are now no more, do they know that when we are happy, we recall them to our memory with tenderneſs?—The ſhade of my mother hovers round me, when in a ſtill evening I ſit in the midſt of her children—when I ſee them aſſembled about me, as they uſed to be aſſembled about her! I then raiſe my ſwimming eyes to Heaven, and wiſh ſhe could look down upon us, and ſee that I fulfil the promiſe which I made to her in her laſt moments, to be a mother to her children! A hundred times I have exclaimed, Pardon, deareſt of mothers, pardon me, if I am not to them all that you were!—Alas! I do all that I can; they are properly cloathed and fed, and ſtill more, they are well educated and be-

loved! If you could behold our mutual attachment, the harmony that ſubſiſts amongſt us, you would give thanks to that Being to whom, dying, you addreſſed ſuch fervent prayers for our happineſs." This ſhe ſaid, my dear friend; but who could repeat all her words? how ſhould cold unfeeling characters catch the expreſſions of ſentiment and genius? Albert gently interrupted her—" My charming Charlotte, you are too much affected: I know theſe recollections are dear to you, but I beg—" " Oh! Albert," ſaid ſhe, " you do not forget, I know you do not, the evenings when we three, during the abſence of my father, uſed to ſit at our little round table, after the children were gone to bed. You often had a book in your hand, but you ſeldom read any of it—and who would not have preferred the converſation of that delightful woman to every thing in the world? She was beautiful, mild, chearful, and always active. God knows how often I have knelt before

before him, and prayed that I might be like her."

I threw myſelf at her feet; I took her hands, and wetting them with my tears, ſaid, "Charlotte! Charlotte! the benediction of Heaven is upon you, and the ſpirit of your mother."—"If you had but known her," ſhe ſaid, and preſſed my hand—"ſhe was worthy of being known to you."—I was motionleſs; never had I received praiſe ſo flattering. "And this woman was to die in the flower of her age; the youngeſt of her children was but ſix months old. Her illneſs was ſhort; ſhe was reſigned and calm: nothing gave her any anxiety but her children, and more particularly the youngeſt. When ſhe found her end approaching, ſhe bade me go and fetch them; and when they were all around her bed, the little ones who did not know their misfortune, and the great ones who were quite overcome with ſorrow, ſhe raiſed her feeble hands to Heaven, hung over them, and prayed

prayed for them, then kiſſed them one after the other, ſent them back, and ſaid to me, "Be you their mother." I held out my hand to her. "You promiſe much, my child; a mother's fondneſs and a mother's care. Your tears of affection and gratitude have often ſhewn me that you felt what was a mother's tenderneſs—ſhew ſuch tenderneſs to your brothers and ſiſters: and to your father be dutiful and faithful as a wife; you will be his comfort." She aſked for him. He was gone out to hide the bitterneſs of his grief; he felt all that he was to loſe, and his heart was in agonies.

"You, Albert, were in the room. She heard ſomebody move; aſked who it was, and deſired you to come to her. She looked at us both with great compoſure and ſatisfaction in her countenance, and ſaid, "They will be happy, they will be happy with one another!"—Albert, taking her in his arms, cried out, "Yes, Charlotte, we are and ſhall be happy."—

Even

Even the calm Albert was moved;—I was quite out of my ſenſes.

"And ſuch a woman," ſhe continued, "was to leave us, Werter!—Great God! muſt we thus part with every thing we hold dear in the world! Nobody feels this more keenly than children; they cried and lamented for a long time afterwards, that black men had carried away their dear mamma!"

Charlotte got up;—it rouzed me—but I remained ſitting, and held her hand. "Let us go," ſaid ſhe; "it is quite time." She drew away her hand; I graſped it ſtill cloſer. "We ſhall ſee one another again," I ſaid; "we ſhall find one another out; under whatever form it is, we ſhall know one another. I am going; yes, I am going of my own accord; but if it was for ever, it would be more than I could bear. Adieu, Charlotte! adieu, Albert! we ſhall ſee one another again."—"Yes, to-morrow, I fancy," ſhe added, ſmiling. I felt the word *to-*

morrow.

morrow. Alas! ſhe ſcarcely knew when ſhe withdrew her hand from me.—She went down the walk: I ſtood and followed her with my eyes, then threw myſelf on the ground in a paſſion of tears; I got up again, and ran up to the terrace, and there I ſtill ſaw, under the ſhade of the lime-trees, her white gown waving near the garden-gate. I ſtretched out my arms, and ſhe diſappeared!

LETTER XXXVIII.

20th October.

I Arrived here yeſterday. The miniſter is indiſpoſed, and will not go out for ſome days. If he was leſs peeviſh and moroſe all would do well. I ſee it but too plainly, Heaven has deſtined me to ſevere trials: but I won't be diſheartened; one may bear any thing with a little levity.

I can

I can ſcarcely help ſmiling at the word which has juſt eſcaped me; a little of that levity, which I am totally without, would make me the happieſt of men. And muſt I deſpair of my faculties, and of the gifts of nature, whilſt others of far inferior ſtrength and talents are parading before me with the utmoſt ſatisfaction in themſelves? Great God! amidſt the bleſſings thou has deigned to ſhower down upon me, why was I not endowed with ſelf-complacency and confidence? But patience, and all will I hope be better; for I will own to you, my dear friend, that you were in the right: ſince I have been obliged to mix continually with other men; ſince I have had an opportunity of obſerving their deſigns, their conduct, their converſation, I am become more eaſy, and more ſatisfied with myſelf. As we naturally compare ourſelves with every thing we meet, our happineſs or miſery depends on the objects which are brought into compariſon with us, and in this reſpect

ſpect nothing is more dangerous than ſolitude. There our imagination, which is ever diſpoſed to riſe, takes a new flight on the wings of fancy, and forms a chain of beings, of which we are the laſt and moſt inferior. All things appear greater than they really are, and all ſeem ſuperior to us; and this operation of the mind is natural. We are continually feeling our own imperfections; we think we have obſerved in others, qualities which we have not, and conclude they alſo poſſeſs all we have ourſelves; and thus we have made a perfect, a happy man:—but ſuch a man exiſts only in our imaginations.

But when, in ſpite of weakneſs and diſappointment, we direct our endeavours to one end, and ſteadily perſevere in the purſuit of it, we often find that we have made more way, though continually tacking, than others with all the aſſiſtance of wind and tide; and yet that is a true judgment which we form of ourſelves from our ſituation

tuation with others, whether we are on a line with them, or before them.

LETTER XXXIX.

10th November.

I Begin to think my ſituation more tolerable; I am much occupied; and the number of actors, and the different parts they play, make a very amuſing variety in the ſcene. I have made an acquaintance with the Count of C—, and I eſteem him more and more every day. He is a man of ſtrong underſtanding, and great diſcernment: but though he ſees farther than other people, he is not therefore cold in his temper and manner; his ſenſibility ſurpaſſes all his other qualities. One morning that I went to ſpeak to him upon buſineſs, he expreſſed a friendſhip for me; by the firſt word he perceived that

that we underſtood each other, and that he might talk to me in a ſtyle different from that he made uſe of with moſt of the others.

I cannot expreſs the ſatisfaction I receive from the openneſs of his conduct with regard to me. It is the greateſt of pleaſures when a delicate mind thus lays itſelf open to one.

LETTER XL.

December 24.

I Foreſaw it; the miniſter occaſions me a number of vexations. 'Tis the moſt punctilious blockhead under heaven; he goes on ſtep by ſtep, with the trifling minuteneſs of an old woman. But how can a man be pleaſed with other people who is never ſatisfied with himſelf? I like to go on with buſineſs regularly and with alacrity;

crity; and when it is finiſhed, that it ſhould be finiſhed. But not ſo with him; he is capable of returning my draught to me, and ſaying, "It will do; but go over it again however, there is always ſomething to correct; one may find a better phraſe, or a properer word."—I then loſe all patience, and wiſh myſelf at the devil. Not a conjunction, not one connecting word muſt be omitted; and as to the tranſpoſitions, which I like, and which flow naturally from my pen, he is their mortal foe. If every ſentence is not expreſſed exactly in the ſtyle of the office, he is quite loſt. 'Tis deplorable to have any connection with ſuch a perſonage.

The only thing which gives me ſatisfaction, is my intimacy with Count C—. He very frankly told me, the other day, how much he was diſpleaſed with the difficulties and delays of the miniſter; that people of his caſt muſt make every thing troubleſome to themſelves, and to others: "But," added he, "one muſt ſubmit,

as a traveller that is obliged to climb over a mountain; if the mountain was not in the way, his road would undoubtedly be ſhorter, and more convenient, but in fine, there it is, and he muſt go over it."

The old man perceives the Count's preference for me: it makes him angry. When I am preſent, he takes every opportunity to depreciate the Count: I naturally take up his defence, and that increaſes his diſpleaſure. Yeſterday I was well aware that when he aimed a ſtroke at my friend, he meant that it ſhould alſo hit me.—" For the common affairs of the world," ſaid he, " the Count may do very well; his ſtyle is good, and he writes with facility; but, like other great geniuſes, he has no ſolid learning." I longed to ſtrike him; for to what purpoſe is argument with ſuch a kind of animal? However, as that was not poſſible, I anſwered, with ſome warmth, that every reſpect was due to him, both for his underſtanding and his character; that he was

the

the only man I had ever met with, whoſe extenſive genius raiſed him ſo high above the common level, and who yet retained all his activity in buſineſs. This was algebra to his conceptions; and I withdrew, leſt ſome new abſurdity in him ſhould raiſe my choler too much. It is you that are the authors of my ill-fortune; you, all of you, who forced me to bend my neck to this yoke, and preached activity to me. If the man who plants potatoes, and carries them to town on market-days, is not a more active being than I am, then let me work ten years longer at the curſed galley to which I am now chained.

And diſtaſte and laſſitude, thoſe faſhionable miſeries which reign amongſt the ſilly people who affect an unmixt ſociety; the ambition of rank! how they toil, how they watch to gain precedence! What poor and contemptible paſſions, and how plain to be ſeen! We have a woman here, for example, who never ceaſes to entertain the company with accounts of her fa-

mily, and her eſtates. Any ſtranger who heard her would ſuppoſe ſhe was a ſilly creature, whoſe head was turned by ſome ſlight pretence at leaſt to rank, or the lordſhip of a manor; but, ſtill more ridiculous, ſhe is the daughter of a ſteward's clerk in this neighbourhood! I cannot conceive how the human race can ſo debaſe itſelf.

I do indeed every day perceive more and more how abſurd it is to judge of others by one's ſelf. And it is with ſo much difficulty that I ſtop the ferment of my blood, and keep my heart at peace, that I very readily leave every one to purſue the path he has choſen; but at the ſame time I aſk a like permiſſion for myſelf.

Theſe paltry diſtinctions between the inhabitants of the ſame town, are what diſturb me moſt. I know perfectly well, that inequality of conditions is neceſſeary, and how much I myſelf gain by it. But I would not have this inſtitution come in

my way and hinder me, when I might enjoy ſome pleaſure, ſome ſhadow of happineſs upon this earth.

I have lately made an acquaintance with a Miſs B. a very agreeable girl; who, notwithſtanding the formality and ſtiffneſs of the people about her, has retained a very eaſy and unaffected manner. The firſt converſation we had together, equally pleaſed us both; and when we parted I deſired leave to pay my reſpects to her; which ſhe granted in ſo obliging a manner, that I waited with impatience for the time to avail myſelf of it. She is not of this place, but lives here with an aunt. The countenance of the old virago diſpleaſed me at firſt ſight; however I paid her great attention, and often addreſſed myſelf to her. In about half an hour, I pretty nearly gueſſed what her niece has ſince acknowledged. This good aunt, who is in years, with a ſmall fortune, and ſtill ſmaller ſhare of underſtanding, has no ſatisfaction but in the long liſt of her an-

ceſtors; no protection but her noble birth; this is the defence, the rampart with which ſhe ſurrounds herſelf; and her only amuſement is ſtanding at her window to look down with ſovereign contempt on the ignoble heads which paſs under it in the ſtreet. This ridiculous old woman was formerly handſome, and many a young man was the ſport of her caprice: that was the golden age. Her charms faded, ſhe was forced to accept of an old half-pay officer, and be ſubſervient to his will: that was the age of braſs. Now ſhe is a widow, and deſerted; was it not for her agreeable niece, nobody would take notice of her:—this may truly be called the iron age.

LETTER

LETTER XLI.

January 8, 1772.

WHAT men are theſe!—Form occupies their whole ſouls: they can employ their time and thoughts for a whole year together, in contriving how to get nearer, by one chair only, to the upper end of the table.—And don't call it idleneſs; for on the contrary they increaſe their labour, by giving to theſe trifles the time they ought to employ in buſineſs. Laſt week, in a party upon the ice in ſledges, there was a diſpute for precedence, and the party was immediately broken up.

The idiots! they do not ſee that 'tis not the place which conſtitutes real greatneſs: the man who enjoys the higheſt poſt very rarely acts the principal part; many a king is governed by his miniſter, and many a miniſter by his ſecretary. Who is in that caſe to be accounted

the firſt, and chief? Is it not the man who has the power or the addreſs to make the paſſions of others ſubſervient to his own deſigns?

LETTER XLII.

January 20.

I MUST write to you from hence, my dear Charlotte; from a cottage where I have been obliged to take ſhelter from a violent ſtorm. In all the time that I have ſpent in that melancholy town, amidſt ſtrangers—ſtrangers indeed to this heart—I have not been impelled to write to you: but in this cottage, in this retirement, in this ſort of impriſonment, whilſt the ſnow and hail are driving againſt my little window, I find myſelf reſtored to you and to myſelf. The moment I entered, your figure preſented itſelf before my eyes, and the remembrance of you filled

ed my heart. Oh! my Charlotte, the ſacred remembrance! the tender recollections!—Gracious Heaven! reſtore to me that firſt moment in which I beheld her!

Could you but ſee me, my dear Charlotte, in that vortex where every thing diſſipates, and nothing touches me! My ſenſes are dried up; my heart is at no time full; I never ſhed the ſoft tears of tenderneſs; nothing, nothing touches me. I ſtand, as it were, before the raree-ſhow; I ſee the little puppets move, and I ſay to myſelf it is a deception of optics. I am amuſed with theſe puppets, or rather I am myſelf one of them. I take the hand of the man who ſtands next to me, I feel that it is made of wood, I ſhudder and draw mine back. I have found but one being here that is of the ſame order with you, a Miſs B. She reſembles you, my dear Charlotte, if indeed it is poſſible for any thing to reſemble you, "Ah!" you will ſay, "he has learnt to make ele-

gant

gant compliments." And there is ſome truth in your obſervation. I have been prodigiouſly agreeable lately, not having it in my power to be any thing better. I have a great deal of wit too, and the women ſay that nobody underſtands better how to deal out panegyric—" and *lies*," you will add, for one always accompanies the other.—But I meant to talk to you of Miſs B. She has great ſenſibility, and a ſuperior underſtanding; her fine blue eyes ſhew evident marks of both. Her rank is a burthen to her, and gratifies no one paſſion of her ſoul; ſhe would gladly leave this crowd; and we often indulge our imagination in talking, for hours together, of happineſs in retired and country ſcenes, and near you, my dear Charlotte;—for ſhe knows you, ſhe does homage to you; but the homage is not exacted; ſhe loves you, and takes great pleaſure in hearing me talk of you.

Oh! why am I not at your feet in your favourite little room, and the dear children

dren playing round us! If their noiſe became troubleſome to you, I would tell them a ſtory, and they would crowd about me with ſilent attention. The ſun is ſetting; his laſt rays ſhine on the ſnow which covers the face of the country; the ſtorm is over, and I—muſt return to my dungeon. Adieu!—Is Albert with you, and what is he to you? Fool that I am! ſhould I aſk this queſtion?

LETTER XLIII.

February 17.

OUR miniſter and I don't ſeem as if we ſhould continue much longer together: his manner of treating a ſubject, and of doing buſineſs, is ſo abſurd, that I cannot help contradicting him very often, and doing things my own way; and then, of courſe, he thinks them very ill done.

He

He mentioned ſomething of this kind lately in a letter to court, and I had a reprimand from the miniſter there—very gentle indeed—but ſtill it was a reprimand; and I had reſolved to reſign, when I received a private letter, before which I humbled myſelf, and adored the wiſe, the noble, the exalted genius which dictated it—which endeavoured to ſoothe my painful ſenſibility—expreſſed an approbation of my ſchemes, and an opinion of their weight and influence—condeſcending to inquire into buſineſs, as well as to examine the ideas of an impetuous young man. How I am exhorted, not to extinguiſh this fire, but to ſoften it, and keep it within due bounds, that it may be productive of good! So now I am no longer at variance with myſelf, but ſettled, determined—at leaſt for a week to come. Content and peace of mind are valuable things, my dear friend; but if they are precious, they are alſo tranſitory.

LETTER

LETTER XLIV.

February 20.

GOD bleſs you, my dear friends! and may he grant to you that happineſs which he denies to me! I thank you, Albert, for having deceived me.—I waited for the wedding-day to be fixed, and on that day I intended with ſolemnity to have taken down Charlotte's profile from the wall, and with ſome other papers to have buried it. You are now united, and her picture ſtill remains there. Well, let it remain. Why ſhould it not? Does not Charlotte find room for me in her heart? Yes, you may allow me to occupy the ſecond place there, and I will, I ought to keep it; I ſhould become furious if ſhe could forget——Albert, that thought is hell.—May you be happy, Albert!—Charlotte, angel of light, may you be the happieſt of woman!

LETTER

LETTER XLV.

March 15.

I HAVE juſt had an adventure which will drive me from hence: I loſe all patience.—Death!—it is not to be remedied: and you only are the cauſe of all this;—you that drove me on, and urged and tormented me;—you that made me take an employment I am by no means fit for. I have great reaſon now to be ſatisfied—ſo have you! But, that I may not again be told, that the impetuoſity of my temper ruins every thing, I here ſend you, Sir, a plain and ſimple narration of the affair, as any mere chronicler of facts would relate it.

The Count of O— likes me, diſtinguiſhes me; it is known that he does; I have mentioned it to you a hundred times. Yeſterday I dined with him; it was the day on which all the nobility met at his

houſe. I never once dreamed of the aſſembly, nor that we ſubalterns were excluded. In ſhort, I dined with the Count, and after dinner we went into the hall, and talked, and walked backwards and forwards.—Colonel B. who came in, joined in the converſation, and the time paſſed away till the company came. God knows, I was thinking of nothing! when entered the right noble and right honourable Lady of T—, accompanied by her huſband and their ſilly daughter, with her ſmall waiſt and flat neck; with diſdainful looks and a haughty air they paſſed by me. As I hate the whole race, I intended to go away, and was only waiting till the Count had diſengaged himſelf from their impertinent prate, to take leave, when the agreeable Miſs B. came in. As I never ſee her but with pleaſure, I ſtayed and talked to her, leaning over the back of her chair, and did not perceive till after ſome time that ſhe ſeemed a little confuſed, and did not ſpeak to me with her uſual eaſe of

manner.

manner. I was ſtruck with it. "Heavens!" ſaid I to myſelf, "can ſhe too be like all the reſt?" I was angry, and going to withdraw; but the deſire of examining farther into this matter kept me. The reſt of the company came. I ſaw the Baron F— enter with the ſame coat that he wore at the coronation of Francis the firſt; the Chancellor, and his wife, who is old and deaf; the Count of I—, whoſe Gothic dreſs made a ſtill greater contraſt to our modern coats, &c. &c. I ſpoke to thoſe that I knew amongſt them; they were all very laconic in their anſwers. I was taken up with obſerving Miſs B. and did not ſee that the women were whiſpering at the end of the room, and that by degrees the ſame whiſpering and murmuring got round amongſt the men, and that Madame S. was ſpeaking with great warmth to the Count—(this I have ſince learnt from Miſs B.)—At length the Count came up to me, and took me to the window—"You know our ridiculous

cuſtoms,"

cuſtoms," he ſaid; "I perceive the company is rather diſpleaſed at your being here: I would not upon any account—." "I beg your excellency's pardon; I ought to have thought of it before: but I know you will excuſe this little inattention. I was going," I added, "ſome time ago, but my evil genius kept me here;" and ſmiling, I bowed to take leave. He ſhook me by the hand in a manner which expreſſed every thing. I made a bow to the whole illuſtrious aſſembly, got into my chaiſe, and drove to M.—I contemplated the ſetting ſun from the top of the hill.—I read that beautiful paſſage in Homer, where the honeſt herdſmen are deſcribed receiving the king of Ithaca with ſo much hoſpitality; and I returned well pleaſed. When I went into the ſupper-room at night, there were but a few perſons aſſembled, and they had turned up a corner of the table-cloth, and were playing at dice. The good-natured Adelin came up to me as ſoon as I entered, and

in a low voice ſaid, "You have met with a very diſagreeable incident,"—"Who, I?"—"The Count obliged you to withdraw from the aſſembly."—"Devil take the aſſembly!" ſaid I, "I was very glad to be gone." "I am rejoiced," he ſaid, "that you look upon the affair in that light; all that concerns me is, to find that it is talked of every where already." From that moment I began to think of it in a different manner. All thoſe that looked at me whilſt we were at table, I imagined were looking at me on account of this incident; and bitterneſs entered my heart. And now that I am pitied wherever I go, and hear the triumph of my enemies; who ſay, "This is always the caſe with thoſe vain inſignificant perſonages who pretend to deſpiſe forms, and want to raiſe themſelves;" with other nonſenſe of the ſame kind—I could plunge a dagger into my heart. Say what you will of philoſophy and fortitude: one may laugh at nonſenſe that has no foundation, but how is it poſſible to endure that

theſe paltry raſcals ſhould have any hold of one?

LETTER XLVI.

March 16.

EVERY thing conſpires to drive me to extremities. I met Miſs B— walking to-day. I could not help joining her, and expreſſing my ſenſe of her altered manner towards me. "Oh! Werter," ſaid ſhe, with eagerneſs, "you who know my heart, how could you ſo ill interpret my diſtreſs? What did I not ſuffer for you from the firſt moment I entered the room! I foreſaw all that has happened; a hundred times I was upon the point of mentioning it to you. I knew that the S——s and T——s would quit the aſſembly rather than ſtay in your company. I knew the Count could not

break with them; and now all the talk" —I endeavoured to conceal my emotion, and aſked her what talk? "Oh! how much it has already coſt me!" ſaid the amiable girl, and tears came into her eyes. —I could ſcarce contain myſelf—I was ready to throw myſelf at her feet. "Explain yourſelf," I cried.—Her tears flowed, and I was quite frantic. She wiped them away, without endeavonring to hide them. "You know my aunt," ſhe continued; "ſhe was preſent, and, good God! in what a light does ſhe conſider the affair! Werter, what leſſons have I heard laſt night and this morning upon my connection with you! I have been obliged to hear you debaſed and run down; and I could not, I dared not ſay much in your defence."—Every word was a dagger; ſhe did not know that in pity to me ſhe ſhould have concealed all that ſhe informed me of.—She told me too all the impertinent nonſenſe that would be circulated upon the occaſion, and how the malicious would triumph;

triumph; how they would rejoice that my pride was humbled; and how happy it would make them to ſee me puniſhed for that want of eſteem for others, with which I had been often reproached. This is what ſhe told me, and in a manner which ſhewed the warmeſt intereſt; this is what I was forced to hear—it awakened all my paſſions, and I ſtill breathe rage and fury. Would that I could find a man who dared banter me on this event!—I would ſacrifice him inſtantly to my reſentment; it would be a relief to me to diſcharge my fury on the firſt object I met;—a hundred times have I caught up a ſword to give vent to my oppreſſed heart. There is a noble race of horſes, which will inſtinctively open a vein with their teeth, when they are heated by a long courſe, in order to breathe more freely—I am often tempted to open a vein, and procure for myſelf everlaſting liberty.

LETTER XLVII.

March 24.

I HAVE written to court for leave to reſign; and I hope I ſhall obtain it. You will forgive me for not having previouſly conſulted you. It was expedient for me to leave this place.—I knew all you could alledge in order to induce me to ſtay, and therefore——. I beg of you to ſoften this news as much as you can to my mother, when you acquaint her with it. I can do nothing for myſelf; how ſhould I do any thing for others? She will undoubtedly be grieved to find, that I have ſtopped ſhort in that career which would have led directly to my being firſt a Privy Counſellor, and then Miniſter; and to ſee me thus returning to my original nothing. Argue on the ſubject as much as you will, combine all the reaſons which ſhould have induced me to ſtay;

ſtay;—I am going, that is ſufficient. But that you may not be ignorant where I am going, I ſhall tell you that here is the Prince of ——, who is much pleaſed with my company, and who having heard of my intention to reſign, has invited me to his country houſe, to paſs the ſpring months with him. He aſſures me that I ſhall be left quite at liberty; and, as we agree on all ſubjects but one, I ſhall venture to accompany him.

LETTER XLVIII.

April 19.

I THANK you for your two letters. I waited for my anſwer from court before I wrote to you. I was under continual apprehenſion leſt my mother ſhould apply to the miniſter, in order to defeat my purpoſe. But I have received my diſmiſſion:

and here it is. I will not tell you with what regret it was given to me, nor what the miniſter ſaid in his letter to me; for you would renew your lamentations. The money which I ſent to my mother for, I ſhall not want; for the hereditary Prince has made me a preſent—and it was accompanied by a few words which affected me almoſt to tears.

LETTER XLIX.

May 5.

I SET out to-morrow; and as my native place is but ſix miles out of the great road, I have a mind to ſee it, and call back to my remembrance the happy dreams of my childhood. I ſhall go in at the ſame gate which I came through with my mother, when, after my father's death, ſhe left that delightful retreat to immure herſelf in

in your melancholy town. Adieu, my dear friend. You ſhall hear of my expedition.

LETTER L.

May 9.

I Performed my pilgrimage to the place of my nativity with all the devotion of a real pilgrim: I was affected much beyond what I expected. Near the great elm, which is a quarter of a league from the village on the ſide of S—, I got out of the carriage, and ſent it on before, that alone and on foot I might more fully, and without interruption, enjoy all my recollections. I was then under the ſame elm which formerly was the term and object of my walks. How things have ſince changed! Then, in happy ignorance, I languiſhed after a world I did not know, and

and where I hoped to find all the enjoyments my heart ſo often felt the want of: and now I was returned from that world ſo much deſired; and what, my dear friend, did I bring back? Diſappointed hopes, unſucceſsful plans.

I obſerved the oppoſite mountains, and I remembered how often they had excited my wiſhes. I uſed to ſit ſometimes for whole hours looking at them, and ardently longing to wander under the ſhade of thoſe woods which make ſo delightful an object in the diſtance. With what reluctance I quitted this favourite ſpot when the play-hour was over, and my leave of abſence expired! As I drew near to the village, I recogniſed all the little gardens and ſummer-houſes that I was acquainted with. I diſliked the new ones, as I do all the alterations that have been made ſince my time. I went into the village, and felt quite at home again. I cannot, my dear friend, in detail relate all the circumſtances with which I was affected; however

ever intereſting they were to me, there would be a ſameneſs in the relation. I had intended to lodge in the market-place, near our old houſe: as ſoon as I entered, I perceived that the ſchool-room, where we were taught by that good old woman, was turned into a ſhop. I remembered the ſorrow, the dullneſs, the anxiety, the oppreſſion of heart I had experienced in that confinement. Every ſtep was marked by ſome particular impreſſion. A pilgrim in the Holy Land does not meet with ſo many ſpots which bring tender recollections to his mind; and ſcarcely feels more devotion. One ſenſation I will relate, of the thouſand I experienced: Having followed the courſe of the ſtream to a farm, which was formerly a favourite walk likewiſe, and where we uſed to divert ourſelves with making ducks and drakes upon the water, I was moſt forcibly ſtruck with the memory of what I then was: When I looked at the water as it flowed, and formed

formed romantic ideas of the countries it was going to paſs through, my imagination was ſoon exhauſted; but the water continued flowing farther and farther, till I was bewildered in the idea of inviſible diſtance. Exactly ſuch, my dear friend, were the thoughts of our good anceſtors. And when Ulyſſes talks of the immeaſurable ſea, and the unlimited earth, is it not more natural, more true, more according to our feelings, than when, in this philoſophic age, every ſchool-boy thinks himſelf a prodigy, becauſe he can repeat after his maſter that the earth is round?

I am at preſent with the Prince at one of his hunting-lodges. He is an honeſt and unaffected man, and I am very well pleaſed with him: what I diſlike, is his talking of things which he has only read or heard of, and always exactly under the ſame point of view that they have been preſented to him. I am ſorry to ſay, that he values my underſtanding and talents much more highly than that mind, for which

which alone I value myſelf—which alone is the ſource of talents, of happineſs, of miſery, of every thing—which makes me all I am, and is ſolely mine.—Any body may know all that I know.

LETTER LI.

May 25.

I HAD a ſcheme in my head, which I intended to conceal from you till it was accompliſhed;—now that it has failed I may as well tell it to you. I had a mind to go into the army; I had long been deſirous of it, and it was my chief reaſon for coming here with the Prince. He is a general in the ſervice of the ——. As we were walking juſt now, I communicated my deſign to him: he did not approve it; and it would have been madneſs not have yielded to his reaſons.

LETTER

LETTER LII.

June 11.

SAY what you pleaſe, I can ſtay in this place no longer. What ſhould I do here? I am weary of it. The Prince, it is true, treats me in all reſpects as his equal, but ſtill I am not at my eaſe here. Beſides, we are at bottom very different men. He has a good underſtanding, but quite of the common kind; and the pleaſure I have in his converſation, is only ſuch as I receive from reading a well-written book. I ſhall ſtay a week more here, and then travel about again. What I have done beſt, ſince I came to this place, are ſome drawings. The Prince has ſome taſte for the arts, and would have more, if it was not cramped by cold rules and technical terms. I often loſe all patience, when with a glowing imagination I am giving to art and nature the moſt

lively expreſſion, and he ſtops me with learned criticiſms, upon which he highly values himſelf.

LETTER LIII.

June 18.

WHERE am I going? I will tell you in confidence: I am obliged to continue here a fortnight longer; after that, I thought it would be expedient for me to ſee the mines of ——. But 'tis no ſuch thing; I only deceive myſelf: the real truth is, that I wiſh to be near Charlotte again. I am not the dupe of my heart, but I obey its dictates.

LETTER

LETTER LIV.

July 29.

OH! no; 'tis well—'tis all well.—Me her huſband! Eternal Power that gave me being, if thou hadſt deſtined ſuch happineſs for me, my whole life would have been one continual thankſgiving! but I will not murmur againſt thee: forgive my tears, forgive my fruitleſs vows!—She might have been mine; I might have folded in theſe arms all that is lovely under heaven! — My whole frame is convulſed when Albert puts his arm round her waiſt.

Shall I ſay it?—And why ſhould I not ſay it?—She would have been happier with me than with him. Albert was not made for her: he wants a certain ſenſibility; he wants—in ſhort, their hearts do not beat in uniſon! Ah! my dear friend, how often in reading an intereſting paſſage, when my heart and Charlotte's ſeemed to meet—and when our ſentiments

ſentiments were unfolded by the ſtory and ſituation of a fictitious character—how often have I ſeen and felt, that we were made to underſtand each other! Alas, my friend!—But this worthy man loves her with all his ſoul; and what does not ſuch love deſerve?

I have been interrupted by an inſufferable viſit. I have dried up my tears, and my thoughts are a little diſſipated. Adieu, my deareſt friend.

LETTER LV.

Auguſt 4.

I AM not alone unfortunate; men are all diſappointed in their hopes, and all their ſchemes fall to the ground. I have been to ſee the good woman under the lime-trees. The eldeſt boy ran to meet me; he ſcreamed for joy, and that brought out his mother. She looked very melan-

choly. "Alas! my good Sir," ſaid ſhe, "our poor little Jenny is dead; (that was the youngeſt of her children.) I anſwered nothing——"And my huſband," ſhe continued, "came back from Holland without any money; he was taken ill with a fever; and if ſome good people had not relieved him, he muſt have been obliged to beg his bread along the road." I could ſay nothing to her: I gave ſome money to the boy; and ſhe offered me ſome apples, which I accepted, and full of ſorrow left the place.

LETTER LVI.

Auguſt 21.

MY ſenſations change with the rapidity of lightning. Sometimes a ray of joy ſeems to give me new life—Alas! it diſappears in a moment. When I am thus loſt in reveries, I cannot help ſaying

ſaying to myſelf—" If Albert was to die, I ſhould be—yes, Charlotte would"—and I purſue the chimera till it leads me to the edge of a precipice, from which I ſtart back and ſhudder. When I go out at the ſame gate, when I take the ſame road which conducted me for the firſt time towards Charlotte, my heart ſinks within me; and I feel with bitterneſs how different I then was, from what I now am. Yes, all, all is vaniſhed. Not a ſentiment, not a pulſation of my heart is the ſame; no traces of the paſt remain. If the ſhade of a departed prince could return to viſit the ſuperb palaces he had built in happy times, and left to a beloved ſon; and if he found them overthrown and deſtroyed by a more powerful neighbour, ſuch would be his ſenſations.

LETTER LVII.

September 3.

I Sometimes cannot comprehend how it is that ſhe loves another—how ſhe dares love another, whilſt I bear her about me in this heart—whilſt ſhe entirely fills and engroſſes it—whilſt I think only of her, know only her, and have nothing but her in the world.

LETTER LVIII.

September 6.

IT coſt me much to part with the blue frock which I wore the firſt time I danced with Charlotte; I could not poſſibly appear in it any longer: but I have made another exactly like it, and with a buff waiſtcoat and breeches.

It

It has not however the ſame effect upon me. I don't know—but I hope in time it will be as dear to me.

LETTER LIX.

September 15.

ONE is tempted to wiſh one's ſelf at the devil, when one thinks of all the contemptible beings which Heaven ſuffers to crawl upon this earth, without any feeling, without any idea of the things which may be intereſting to others. You remember the walnut-trees at S—, under which I ſat with Charlotte at the worthy old vicar's. Theſe beautiful, theſe beloved trees, how they adorned the parſonage-yard;—their ſhade was refreſhing; it was reſpectable, for it carried one back with pleaſing ideas to the good paſtors who planted them. The ſchool-maſter often mentioned the name of him who planted the oldeſt of them.

He had it from his grandfather. This vicar was an excellent man, and under theſe trees his reſpectable memory was ever preſent to me. The ſchool-maſter had the tears in his eyes yeſterday, when he told us they were cut down.—Cut down! I could in my fury murder the ruffian who ſtruck the firſt ſtroke!—I that ſhould grieve if I had two ſuch trees in my court, and one died of old age; I muſt endure this. I have however one conſolation—ſuch is ſentiment—the whole village murmurs at it, and I hope the good peaſants will make no more preſents to the vicar's wife, and that ſhe will ſuffer for the miſchief ſhe has done in the pariſh—for ſhe did it, the wife of the preſent incumbent (our good old man is dead) a tall, meagre, wrinkled, wan creature, who is ſo far right to diſregard the world, that the world totally diſregards her; an antiquated ſcold, who affects to be learned, pretends to examine the canonical books, lends her aſſiſtance towards the new reformation, moral and critical,

critical, of the Chriſtian religion, and ſhrugs up her ſhoulders at the mention of Lavater's enthuſiaſm. Her health is deſtroyed, and hinders her from having any enjoyment here below. Such a being only could have cut down my walnut-trees. No, I cannot get over it. Would you hear her reaſons? The leaves which fell from them made the court wet and dirty; the trees obſtructed the light; little boys threw ſtones at the nuts, and the noiſe affected her nerves, and diſturbed her profound meditations when ſhe was weighing in the balance Kennicott, Semler, and Michaelis. When I found that all the pariſh was diſpleaſed, and particularly the old people, I aſked them why they ſuffered it?—"Ah! Sir," they ſaid, "when the ſteward orders, what can we poor peaſants do?" However one thing has happened very well; the ſteward and the vicar (who for once thought to reap ſome advantage from the caprices of his wife) intended to divide the trees between

them. The revenue-office being informed of it, took poſſeſſion of the trees, and ſold them to the beſt bidder. There they ſtill lie on the ground. Oh! if I was a ſovereign prince, how I would deal with the vicar, the ſteward, and the revenue-office!—But if I was a prince, what ſhould I care for the trees that grew in my country?

LETTER LX.

October 10.

ONLY to look at her dark eyes, is to me happineſs. What grieves me is, that Albert does not ſeem ſo happy as he expected to be—as I ſhould have been—if—I don't much love ſuſpenſions; but here I cannot expreſs myſelf any otherwiſe.—Heavens! and am I not explicit enough?

LETTER

LETTER LXI.

October 12.

OSSIAN has taken the place of Homer in my heart and imagination. To what a world does the illuſtrious bard carry me! To wander in heaths and wilds, ſurrounded by impetuous whirlwinds, in which, by the feeble light of the moon, we diſcover the ſpirits of our anceſtors; —to hear from the top of the mountains, amidſt the roaring of the waters, their plaintive ſounds iſſuing from deep caverns, and the ſorrowful lamentations of a maiden who ſighs and dies on the moſſy tomb of the warrior by whom ſhe was adored! I meet this bard with ſilver hair; he wanders in the valley; he ſeeks the footſteps of his fathers. Alas! he finds only their tombs! Then contemplating the pale moon as ſhe ſinks beneath the waves of the foaming ſea, the memory of

of time paſt ſtrikes the mind of the hero; —thoſe times when the approach of danger filled his heart with exultation, and gave vigour to his nerves—when the moon ſhone upon his bark, laden with the ſpoils of his enemies, and lighted up his triumph—when I read in his countenance his deep ſorrow—when I ſee his ſinking glory tottering towards the grave —when he caſts a look on the cold earth which is to cover him, and cries out, " The traveller will come, he will come who has ſeen my beauty, and he will aſk, where is the bard, where is the illuſtrious ſon of Fingal? he will walk over my tomb, and he will ſeek me in vain!"— Then, O my friend! I could inſtantly, like a true and noble knight, draw my ſword, and reſcue my prince from long and painful languor, and afterwards plunge it into my own breaſt, to follow the demi-god whom my hand ſet free.

LETTER

LETTER LXII.

October 19.

ALAS! the void, the fearful void I feel in my boſom—Sometimes I think, if I could but once, only once preſs her to my heart, I ſhould be happy.

LETTER LXIII.

26th October.

I AM convinced, my dear friend, more and more convinced, that the exiſtence of any one being whatever is of little, very little conſequence. A friend of Charlotte's came juſt now to make her a viſit: I withdrew, and took up a book in the next room; but I could not read, and therefore I write to you. I hear their converſation:

ſation: they are only talking of the news of the town; one is going to be married, another is ill, very ill. "She has a dry cough, and frequent faintings; ſhe cannot recover," ſays one. "N. is very ill too," ſays Charlotte. "He begins to ſwell already," anſwers the other: And my imagination ſuddenly carries me to their ſick beds: I ſee them ſtruggling againſt approaching death, in all the agonies of pain and horror. I ſee them—And theſe good little women are talking of it with the ſame indifference that one would mention the death of a ſtranger.—And when I look at the apartment in which I now am, when I ſee Charlotte's apparel lying round me; here upon this little table are her ear-rings, Albert's papers, all the things which are ſo familiar to me, the very ink-ſtand I now uſe; and that I think what I am to this family—every thing—my friends eſteem me, are made happy by me, and my heart cannot conceive that any thing could exiſt without them; and yet

yet if I was now to go, if I was to quit this circle, would they feel, how long would they feel that void in their life, which the loſs of me would leave? How long—yes, ſuch is the frailty of man, that there where he moſt feels his own exiſtence, where his preſence makes a real and a ſtrong impreſſion, even in the memory of thoſe who are dear to him; there alſo he muſt periſh and vaniſh away, and that ſo quickly!

LETTER LXIV.

October 27.

I COULD tear open my boſom, I could beat my head againſt the wall, when I ſee how difficult it is to communicate our ideas, our ſenſations to others; to make them enter intirely into our feelings. I cannot receive from another the love, the

the joy, the warmth, the pleaſure, that I do not naturally poſſeſs; nor with a heart glowing with the moſt lively affection, can I make the happineſs of one in whom the ſame warmth and energy are not inherent.

LETTER LXV.

October 30.

A Hundred times have I been upon the point of catching her in my arms! What torment it is to ſee ſuch lovelineſs, ſuch charms, paſſing and repaſſing continually before one, and not dare to touch them! To touch is ſo natural: Do not children touch every thing that they ſee? and I!

LETTER

LETTER LXVI.

November 3.

HOW often, when I have lain down in my bed, have I wiſhed never to wake again! and in the morning I open my eyes, I again behold the ſun, and I am wretched. Oh! why am I not fanciful and hypochondriacal? Why cannot I attribute my woes to intemperate ſeaſons, to diſappointed ambition, to the perſecutions of an enemy? for then this inſupportable load of diſcontent would not reſt wholly upon myſelf. But, wretched that I am! I feel it but too ſenſibly, I alone am the cauſe of my unhappineſs; this ſame boſom, which formerly contained a ſource of delight, is now the ſource of all my torments. Am I not the ſame man who formerly felt only agreeable ſenſations? who, every ſtep he took, ſaw paradiſe before him, and whoſe heart was ex-

panded, and full of benevolence to the whole world. But this heart is now dead, dead to all ſentiment: my eyes are dry, and my ſenſes, no longer refreſhed by ſoft tears, wither away, and periſh, and conſume my brain. My ſufferings are great: I have loſt the only charm of my life; that active ſacred power, which created worlds around me; it is no more. From my window I ſee the diſtant hills; the riſing ſun breaks through the miſts, opens wide the proſpect, and illuminates the country. I ſee the ſoft ſtream gently winding through the willows ſtripped of their leaves. Nature diſplays all her beauties before me, exhibits the moſt enchanting ſcenes, and my heart is unmoved; I remain blind, inſenſible, petrified. Often have I implored Heaven for tears, as the labourer prays for dews to moiſten the parched corn.

But, I feel it, God does not grant ſunſhine or rain to importunate entreaties. Thoſe times, the memory of which now torments

torments me, why were they ſo fortunate? It was becauſe I then waited for the bleſſings of the Eternal with patience, and received them with a grateful and feeling heart.

LETTER LXVII.

November 8.

CHARLOTTE has reproved me for my exceſſes, with ſo much tenderneſs and goodneſs!—In order to forget myſelf, my dear friend, I have for ſome time paſt drank more wine than uſual—"Don't do it," ſaid ſhe; "think of Charlotte." — The neceſſary advice to think of Charlotte! — "I do think of you, and yet 'tis not *thinking* of you; you are always before my eyes, you are in my heart: This very morning I was ſitting in the place where you ſtopped the laſt time—" Immediately ſhe changed

the ſubject. My dear friend, I am no longer any thing, ſhe makes me juſt what ſhe pleaſes.

LETTER LXVIII.

November 15.

I THANK you, my good friend, for intereſting yourſelf ſo kindly in what relates to me, and for the good advice you give me; and I beg of you to make yourſelf eaſy. Leave me to my ſufferings; ſurrounded as I am, I have ſtill ſtrength enough to endure them to the end. I revere our religion; you know I do: I am ſenſible that it often gives ſtrength to the feeble, and comfort to the afflicted.—But has it, ſhould it have this effect on all men equally? Conſider this vaſt univerſe, and you will find millions for whom it never has exiſted; and millions, whether it is preached to them or not,

not, for whom it never will exiſt.—Do not give a wrong conſtruction to this, I beg of you. I don't love vain diſputes on ſubjects which we are all equally ignorant of. What is the deſtiny of man?—to fill up the meaſure of his ſufferings, and drink up the bitter draught.—And if the cup appeared bitter even to the Son of the Moſt High, why ſhould I affect a fooliſh pride, and ſay my cup is ſweet? Why ſhould I be aſhamed to tremble in that fearful moment, when my ſoul ſhall be ſuſpended between exiſtence and annihilation—when diſſolution, like a flaſh of lightning, ſhall illuminate the dark gulph of futurity—when every thing ſhakes around me, and the whole world vaniſhes away?—This is the voice of a creature oppreſſed beyond all reſource, and who feels with terror that he cannot eſcape deſtruction—"My God! my God! why haſt thou forſaken me?"—Should I be aſhamed to uſe this expreſſion? He who ſpreads out the heavens as it were a garment, felt terror himſelf.

LETTER LXIX.

November 20.

CHARLOTTE does not know, does not feel, that ſhe is preparing for me a poiſon which will deſtroy us both; and this deadly poiſon which ſhe preſents to me I ſwallow in large draughts. What mean thoſe looks of kindneſs which ſhe ſometimes beſtows upon me, that complacency with which ſhe hears the ſentiments that ſometimes eſcape me, and the tender pity which appears in her countenance? Yeſterday when I took leave of her, ſhe held out her hand to me, and ſaid, "Adieu, my dear Werter." — *Dear Werter!*—It was the firſt time ſhe ever called me dear; the ſound ſunk deep into my heart: I have repeated it a hundred times ſince; and when I went to bed, I ſaid, "Good night, *my dear Werter*."—I recollected myſelf, and laughed.

LETTER

LETTER LXX.

November 24.

CHARLOTTE is ſenſible of my ſufferings. I found her alone, and was ſilent: ſhe looked ſtedfaſtly at me; the fire of genius, the charms of beauty were fled. But I ſaw in her countenance an expreſſion much more touching;—the expreſſion of ſoft pity, and the tendereſt concern.—Why was I withheld from throwing myſelf at her feet? Why did I not dare to take her in my arms, and anſwer her by a thouſand kiſſes?—She had recourſe to her harpſicord, and in a low and ſweet voice accompanied it with melodious ſounds. Her lips never appeared ſo lovely; they ſeemed but juſt to open to receive the notes of the inſtrument, and return half the vibration.—But who could expreſs ſuch ſenſations! I was ſoon overcome, and, bending down, I pronounced this vow: "Beautiful lips, which celeſ-

tial ſpirits guard, never will I ſeek to profane you." And yet I wiſh—oh! my friend, 'tis like drawing a curtain before my heart—only to taſte this felicity, and die and expiate my crimes.—My crimes!

LETTER LXXI.

November 30.

IT is all over; I ſee it, my fate is decided. Every thing encreaſes my woes; every thing points out my deſtiny. To-day again—

I went to walk by the river-ſide, about dinner-time, for I could not eat. The country was gloomy and deſerted; a cold and damp eaſterly wind blew from the mountains, and black heavy clouds ſpread over the plain. I perceived a man at a diſtance in an old great coat; he was wandering amongſt the rocks, and ſeemed to be looking for plants. When I came up to

to him, he turned about, and I ſaw an intereſting countenance, with all the marks of a ſettled melancholy; his fine black hair was flowing on his ſhoulders. "What are you looking for, friend?" ſaid I. He anſwered, with a deep ſigh, "I am looking for flowers, and I can't find any." "But this is not the ſeaſon for flowers," ſaid I. "There are ſo many flowers," he ſaid, "I have in my garden, roſes, and honey-ſuckles of two ſorts, one of them I had from my father; they grow every where: I have been two whole days looking for them, and I can't find them. There are flowers too above there, yellow, and blue, and red, and that centaury which grows in ſuch pretty cluſters; I can find none of them." I aſked him what he intended to do with theſe flowers. He ſmiled, and holding up his finger with a myſterious air, ſaid, "Don't betray me, I have promiſed my miſtreſs a noſegay." "You did well," ſaid I. "Oh! ſhe has every thing," he anſwered, "ſhe is very

rich."—"And yet," ſaid I, "ſhe likes your noſegays?" "Oh! ſhe has jewels and a crown!" he exclaimed. I aſked who ſhe was. "If the States General would but pay me," he cried out, "I ſhould be quite another man! Alas! there was a time when I was ſo happy; but that time is paſt, and I am now—" he raiſed his ſwimming eyes to heaven.—"You were then happy!" I ſaid. "Alas! why am I not ſtill the ſame?" ſaid he; "I was ſo well, ſo gay, ſo contented—I was like a fiſh in the water." An old woman who was coming towards us, called out, "Henry, Henry! where are you? we have been looking every where for you; come to dinner!" "Is that your ſon?" I aſk'd her. "Yes, my poor unfortunate ſon," ſaid ſhe; "the Lord has ſent us this affliction." I aſked whether he had been long in that ſtate. "It is about ſix months," ſhe anſwered, "ſince he has been calm as he is now, and I thank Heaven for it; he was one whole year quite

quite raving, and chained down in a mad-houſe; now he does no harm to any body, but he talks of nothing but kings and emperors. He was a very good young man, and helped to maintain me; he wrote a very fine hand: and all of a ſudden he became melancholy, was ſeized with a burning fever, grew diſtracted, and is now as you ſee. If I was to tell you, Sir——" —I interrupted her by aſking at what time it was that he boaſted of having been ſo happy. "Poor boy," ſaid ſhe, with a ſmile of compaſſion, "it is the time in which he was entirely out of his ſenſes; he never ceaſes to regret it: it is the time when he was confined and abſolutely raving." I was thunderſtruck. I put ſome money into his hand, and went away.

"You were happy!" I exclaimed, as I walked haſtily back towards the town; "you were like a fiſh in the water!" God of heaven! is this the deſtiny of man? is he only happy before he poſſeſſes his reaſon, and after he has loſt it? You are unfortunate,

fortunate, and I envy your lot: Full of hopes you go to gather flowers for your princeſs—in winter!—and are grieved not to find any, and don't know why they cannot be found.—But as for me, I wander without hope, without deſign, and I return as I came. To your diſordered fancy it appears that if the States General paid you, you ſhould be a man of conſequence; and happy it is for you that you can attribute your ſufferings to any foreign power. You do not know, you do not feel that your wretchedneſs is in your agitated heart, in your diſordered brain, and that all the kings and potentates on earth cannot reſtore you.

Let their death be without conſolation, who can laugh at the ſick man that travels to diſtant ſprings, only to find an accumulation of diſeaſe, and a death more painful! or that can exult over the depreſſed mind, who to obtain peace of conſcience, to alleviate his miſeries, makes a pilgrimage to the Holy Land! Every ſtep which wrings

wrings his feet in unbeaten paths, is a drop of balm to his ſoul, and each night brings new relief to his heart.—Will you dare to call this extravagance, you that raiſe yourſelves upon ſtilts to make pompous declamations?—Extravagance!—O God, thou ſeeſt my tears! thou haſt given unto us a ſufficient portion of miſery, muſt we alſo have brethren that perſecute us, that would deprive us of all conſolation, and take away our truſt in thee, in thy love and mercy? The vine which ſtrengthens us, the root which heals us, comes from thy hand—Relief and ſaving health are thine. Father! whom I know not!—thou who wert wont to fill my ſoul, but now hideſt thy face from me!—call me back, ſpeak to my heart!—in vain thy ſilence would delay a ſoul which thirſts after thee!—What father would be wrathful againſt his ſon, if he appeared ſuddenly before him, and fell on his neck, and cried out, "Oh, my father! forgive me if I have ſhortened my journey, if I am returned before

before the appointed time!—The world is every where the ſame—labour and pain, pleaſure and reward, all were alike indifferent to me—I find happineſs only in thy preſence, and here let me remain whatever is my fate!—And wouldſt thou, heavenly and adored Father, baniſh this child from thy aweful preſence?

LETTER LXXII.

December 1.

MY dear friend, the man I deſcribed to you, the man ſo enviable in his misfortunes, was ſecretary to Charlotte's father. He conceived an unhappy paſſion for her; he cheriſhed, concealed, and at length diſcovered it—was diſmiſſed, and became ſuch as I yeſterday ſaw him.—Think what an impreſſion theſe few words made upon me! which Albert repeated with as much tranquillity, as perhaps you read them.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIII.

December 4.

IT is all over, my dear friend; I can ſupport this ſtate no longer. To-day I was ſitting by Charlotte; ſhe was playing on her harpſicord, with an expreſſion it is impoſſible for me to deſcribe to you. Her little ſiſter was dreſſing her doll upon my lap; the tears came into my eyes; I leaned down and looked intently at her wedding-ring; my tears fell—immediately ſhe began to play the favourite, the divine air which has ſo often enchanted me.—I felt comforted by it; but ſoon it recalled to my mind the times that are paſt—Grief! diſappointed hopes!—I began to walk with haſty ſtrides about the room—I was choaked — At length I went up to her, and with eagerneſs ſaid, "For heaven's ſake, play that no longer." She ſtopped, looked ſtedfaſtly at me, and ſaid, with a ſmile that ſunk deep

deep into my heart, "Werter, you are indeed very ill: your moſt favourite food diſguſts you. Pray go, and try to compoſe yourſelf."—I tore myſelf from her.—Great God! thou ſeeſt my torments, and thou wilt put an end to them!

LETTER LXXIV.

December 6.

HOW her image haunts me! Awake or aſleep ſhe is ever preſent to my ſoul!—Soon as I cloſe my eyes, here in this brain, where all my nerves are concentered, her dark eyes are imprinted. Here—I don't know how to deſcribe it:—but if I ſhut my eyes, hers are immediately before me like a ſea, like a precipice, and they occupy all the fibres of my head.—What is man! that boaſted demigod! his ſtrength fails him when moſt he wants

wants it;—and whether he ſwims in pleaſure, or bends under a load of ſorrow, he is forced to ſtop; and whilſt he is graſping at infinity, finds he muſt return again to his firſt cold exiſtence.

LETTER LXXV.

December 8.

I FEEL, as thoſe wretches muſt have felt who were formerly ſuppoſed to be poſſeſſed by devils. Sometimes I am ſeized with ſtrange ſtarts and motions;—it is not agony, it is not paſſion, it is an interior ſecret rage which tears my boſom, and ſeems to ſeize my throat—Wretch that I am!—Then I run, and wander amidſt the dark and gloomy ſcenes which this unfriendly ſeaſon exhibits. Laſt night I felt thus conſtrained to go out of the town. I had been told that the river, and all the brooks in the neighbourhood, had over-

flown their banks, and that my favourite valley was under water. I ran thither at paſt eleven o'clock: it was a gloomy and aweful ſight! the moon was behind a cloud, but by means of a few ſcattered rays I could perceive the foaming waves rolling over the fields and meadows, and beating againſt the buſhes; the whole valley was as a ſtormy ſea, toſſed by furious winds. The moon then appeared again, and reſted on a dark cloud; the ſplendor of her light increaſed the diſorder of nature. The echoes repeated and redoubled the roarings of the wind and the waters. I drew near to the precipice; I wiſhed and ſhuddered; I ſtretched out my arms, I leaned over, I ſighed, and loſt myſelf in the happy thought of burying all my ſufferings, all my torments, in that abyſs, and toſſing amidſt the waves. Why were my feet rooted to the earth? why could I not thus have put an end to my miſery? But I feel it, my dear friend, my hour is not yet come. With what delight

ſhould

ſhould I have changed my nature, and have incorporated with the whirlwinds to rend the clouds and diſturb the waters! Perhaps I may one day quit my priſon, and taſte theſe pleaſures.

I looked ſorrowfully down upon a little ſpot where I had ſat under a willow by the ſide of Charlotte, after a ſummer's walk; that alſo was under water. I could hardly diſtinguiſh the tree. Alas! I then thought of the meadows, the fields round the hunting-lodge; the walks, the green receſſes, now perhaps laid waſte by the torrent; and the memory of time for ever loſt entered my heart.—Thus, to the ſleeping captive, dreams recall all the bleſſings he is deprived of.—I ſtopped.—I don't reproach myſelf, I have the courage to die;—I ſhould have.—I am now like an old and wretched woman, who picks dry ſticks along the hedge ſide, and begs bread from door to door, to prolong for a few moments her feeble and miſerable exiſtence.

LETTER LXXVI.

December 17.

I KNOW not how it is, my dear friend, my imagination is full of terror! Is not my love for her the pureſt and the moſt ſacred? Is it not the love of a brother for his ſiſter? Did ever my heart form a wiſh that was criminal?—I will make no vows.—And now a dream—Oh! they were much in the right who attributed contending paſſions to powers that are foreign to us!—This very night — I tremble as I write it — this very night I held her in my arms, I preſſed her to my boſom, devoured her trembling lips with kiſſes. The moſt melting ſoftneſs was in her eyes, in mine equal extaſy. When I now at this moment recall theſe tranſports with delight, am I guilty of a crime?—Oh! Charlotte! Charlotte! 'tis all over;—my ſenſes are diſordered, and for theſe ſeven days I have not

not been myſelf;—my eyes are full of tears;—all places are alike to me; in none am I at peace;—I deſire nothing, I aſk nothing.—Ah! 'twere better far that I ſhould depart!

[*The Editor to the Reader.*

IN order to give a connected account of the laſt days of Werter, I am obliged to interrupt the courſe of his letters by a narration; the materials for which were furniſhed to me by Charlotte, Albert, his own ſervant, and ſome other witneſſes.

THE paſſion of Werter had inſenſibly diminiſhed the harmony which ſubſiſted between Charlotte and her huſband. The affection of Albert for his wife was ſincere, but calm, and had by degrees given place to his buſineſs. He did not indeed own, even to himſelf, that there was this difference between the days of courtſhip

and the days of marriage; but he felt a certain diſpleaſure at the marked attentions of Werter. It was an infringement of his right, and a kind of tacit reproof. This idea increaſed the diſſatisfaction he felt from buſineſs that was continually accumulating, that was full of difficulties, and for which he was but indifferently paid. The grief which preyed on Werter's heart had exhauſted the ſtrength of his genius; he had loſt his vivacity and his quick perceptions; in ſociety he appeared joyleſs and flat. This diſpoſition had of courſe an influence upon Charlotte, who ſaw him every day; and ſhe fell into a ſort of melancholy, which Albert attributed to the progreſs of her attachment to her lover, and Werter to the deep concern ſhe felt for the alteration in Albert's conduct towards her. The want of confidence in theſe two friends made their ſociety irkſome to each other. Albert avoided going to his wife's apartment when Werter was there; and Wer-

ter, who perceived it, after ſome fruitleſs efforts to deſiſt, took thoſe opportunities to ſee her, when he knew Albert was engaged. Diſcontent and bitterneſs of heart increaſed, till at length Albert very drily told his wife, that, were it for the ſake of appearance only, ſhe ſhould behave differently to Werter, and not ſee him ſo often. About the ſame time, this unfortunate young man was confirmed in his reſolution to quit this world. It had long been his moſt favourite thought, and particularly ſince his return to the neighbourhood of Charlotte. He had always encouraged it, but he would not commit ſuch an action with precipitation and raſhneſs; he was determined to take this ſtep like a man who knows what he is doing, is reſolved and firm, but calm and tranquil. His doubts and ſtruggles may be ſeen by the following fragment, which was found, without any date, amongſt his papers, and which appears to have been the beginning of a letter to his friend.]

—HER preſence, her fate, the intereſt ſhe ſhews for mine, have power ſtill to draw ſome tears from my withered brain!

One lifts up the curtain; one paſſes to the other ſide—that is all!—And why all theſe delays? why all theſe fears?—Becauſe we know not what is behind—becauſe there is no returning—and we ſuppoſe that all is darkneſs and confuſion, where there is uncertainty.

[HIS mortification, when he was ſecretary to the ambaſſador, was never effaced from his memory. Whenever he mentioned it, which did not often happen, it was eaſy to perceive that he thought his honour irrecoverably wounded by that adventure; and it gave him a diſtaſte for public affairs, and all political buſineſs. He then gave way entirely to thoſe ſingular opinions and ſentiments which are to be met with in theſe letters; and to a paſſion which knew no bounds, and which

was

was deſtined to conſume all his remaining vigour. The continual ſameneſs and ſadneſs of his intercourſe with the moſt amiable and moſt beloved of women, whoſe peace he diſturbed — his conflicts and ſtruggles—and the ſeeing his life paſs away without end or deſign, drove him at length to put an end to his exiſtence.]

LETTER LXXVII.

December 20.

I MUST depart!—I thank you for having repeated the word ſo ſeaſonably.—Yes, it is undoubtedly better that I ſhould depart. However, I do not entirely approve the ſcheme of returning to your neighbourhood: at leaſt I ſhould like to make a tour in my way; particularly as one may expect a froſt, and conſequently good roads. I am much pleaſed with your intention of coming to fetch

me; I only deſire you to defer your journey for a fortnight, and to wait for another letter from me. One ſhould gather nothing before it is ripe, and a fortnight ſooner or later makes a great difference. Deſire my mother to think of me in her prayers; and tell her I ſincerely aſk her pardon for all the unhappineſs I have occaſioned her. I was doomed to give ſorrow to all thoſe whoſe happineſs I ought to have promoted. Adieu! my dear, my deareſt friend! May all the bleſſings of Heaven attend you! Adieu!

[THE ſame day (which was the Sunday before Chriſtmas) Werter went in the evening to Charlotte's houſe, and found her alone. She was buſy preparing little gifts for her brothers and ſiſters, which were to be diſtributed on Chriſtmas-eve. He began talking of the delight of the children, and of that age when the opening of the door, and the ſudden appearance of the deſſert decorated with fruit and ſweetmeats, and lighted

lighted up with wax candles, cauſes ſuch tranſports of joy—"You ſhall have a gift too, if you behave well," ſaid Charlotte, hiding her embarraſſment under a ſweet ſmile. "What do you call behaving well," ſaid he, "my dear Charlotte?" She anſwered, "Thurſday night is Chriſtmas-eve: the children are all to be here, and my father too; there is a preſent for each; do you come likewiſe—but do not come before that time."—Werter was ſtruck—"I deſire you will not; it muſt be ſo; I aſk it of you as a favour; it is for my own peace and tranquillity that I aſk it; we muſt not go on in this manner any longer."—He turned away his face, walked haſtily up and down the room, and muttered between his teeth, "We muſt not go on in this manner any longer." Charlotte ſeeing the violent agitation into which theſe words had thrown him, endeavoured to divert his thoughts by different queſtions. But it was in vain. "No, Charlotte," ſaid he, "I will

will never ſee you more!" "And why ſo, Werter? we may, we muſt ſee one another again, only let it be with more diſcretion. Oh! why were you born with that impetuoſity—with that exceſſive, that ungovernable paſſion for every thing that is dear to you?" Then, taking his hand, ſhe ſaid, "Let me beg of you to be more calm; what a variety of pleaſure and entertainment your fine underſtanding, your genius and talents may furniſh you!—Be yourſelf, and get the better of an unfortunate attachment to me, who can only pity you."—He bit his lips, and looked at her with a dark and angry countenance. She continued to hold his hand—"Grant me a moment's patience, Werter!—Do you not ſee that you are deceiving yourſelf, that you are ſeeking your own deſtruction? Why muſt it be only me—me who belong to another?—I fear, I much fear, that the impoſſibility only of poſſeſſing me makes the deſire of it ſo ſtrong." He drew

drew back his hand, and with wild and angry looks fixed his eyes on her—" 'Tis well!" he exclaimed, " 'tis very well!—Did not Albert furniſh you with this reflection—'tis a very profound one." " It is a reflection that any one might very eaſily make," ſhe anſwered: " What! is there not in the whole world one woman, who is at liberty, and who has the power to make you happy? Get the better of yourſelf; look for ſuch a woman, and believe me when I tell you that you will certainly find her. I have long apprehended for you, and for us all, the ſmall circle to which you have confined yourſelf.—Make an effort; a journey may and will diſſipate you.—Seek and find an object worthy your tenderneſs; then return here, and enjoy with us all the happineſs that can ariſe from the moſt perfect friendſhip."

" This ſpeech, my dear Charlotte," ſaid Werter, with a ſmile, but full of acrimony, " ought to be printed for the improvement

improvement of all teachers. Allow me but a little time longer, and all will be well."—"But however, Werter, don't come again before Chriſtmas-eve," ſhe ſaid.—He was going to anſwer, when Albert came in.—Werter and he coolly ſaluted each other, and with apparent embarraſſment walked up and down the room. They began to converſe on different ſubjects, but without connection, and they were ſoon dropped. Albert aſked his wife about ſome commiſſions he had given her; and finding they were not executed, he made uſe of ſome harſh expreſſions, which pierced the heart of Werter. He wiſhed to go, but had not power to move; and in this ſituation he remained till eight o'clock; uneaſineſs of temper and acrimony continually increaſing; till at length the cloth was laid, and he took leave, whilſt Albert very coldly aſked him, if he would not ſtay ſupper.

Werter returned home, took the candle from his ſervant, and went up to his room alone.

alone. He was heard talking with great earneſtneſs, and walking haſtily in his room in a paſſion of tears. At length, without undreſſing, he threw himſelf on the bed; where his ſervant found him at eleven o'clock, when he ventured to go in and take off his boots. Werter did not prevent him, but ordered him not to come in the morning till he rung.

Monday morning, the 21ſt of December, he wrote the following letter, which was found ſealed on his bureau after his death, and given to Charlotte. I ſhall inſert it in fragments, as it appears by ſeveral circumſtances to have been written.]

—IT is all over.—Charlotte, I am reſolved to die; I tell it you deliberately and coolly, without any romantic paſſion, the morning of that day on which I am to ſee you for the laſt time. At the very moment when you read theſe lines, Oh! beſt of women! a cold grave holds the inanimate

inanimate remains of that agitated unhappy man, who in the laſt moments of his life knew no pleaſure ſo great as that of converſing with you. I have paſſed a dreadful night—or rather let me call it a propitious one; for it has determined me, it has fixed my purpoſe; I am reſolved to die. When I tore myſelf from you yeſterday, my ſenſes were in the greateſt tumult and diſorder; my heart was oppreſſed; hope and every ray of pleaſure were fled for ever from me; and a petrifying cold ſeemed to ſurround my wretched being.—I could ſcarcely reach my room; —I threw myſelf on my knees.—Heaven for the laſt time granted me the conſolation of ſhedding tears. My troubled ſoul was agitated by a thouſand ideas, a thouſand different ſchemes! at length one thought took poſſeſſion of me, and is now fixed in my heart—I will die.—It is not deſpair, it is conviction that I have filled up the meaſure of my ſufferings, that I have reached the term, and that I ſacri-

fice myſelf for you. Yes, Charlotte, why ſhould I not ſay it? It is neceſſary for one of us three to depart—it ſhall be Werter. —Oh! my dear Charlotte! this heart, governed by rage and fury, has often conceived the horrid idea of murdering your huſband—you—myſelf!—I muſt then depart.—When in the fine evenings of ſummer, you walk towards the mountains, think of me; recollect the times you have ſo often ſeen me come up from the valley; raiſe your eyes to the church-yard which contains my grave; and by the light of the departing ſun, ſee how the evening breeze waves the high graſs which grows over me!—I was calm when I began my letter; but the recollection of theſe ſcenes makes me cry like a child.

[ABOUT ten in the morning, Werter called his ſervant; and as he was dreſſing, told him he ſhould go in a few days, bid him lay his cloaths in order, call in his bills, fetch home the books he had

had lent, and give two months pay to thoſe poor people who were uſed to receive a weekly allowance from him. He breakfaſted in his room; and then mounted his horſe, and went to make a viſit to the ſteward, who was not at home. He walked penſively in the garden, and ſeemed as if he wiſhed to renew all the ideas that were moſt painful to him. The children did not ſuffer him to remain long alone; they all went in purſuit of him, and ſkipping and dancing round him, told him, that after to-morrow, and to-morrow, and one day more, they were to have their Chriſtmas-gift from Charlotte; and deſcribed to him all the wonderful things their little imaginations had formed an expectation of. "To-morrow," ſaid he, "and to-morrow, and one day more!"—and he kiſſed them tenderly. He was going, but the little one ſtopped him, to whiſper in his ear, that his brothers had wrote fine compliments upon the new-year—very fine indeed, and very long,—

one

one for papa, and one for Albert and Charlotte, and one for Mr. Werter too; and that they were to be preſented very early in the morning on new-year's day.—

This laſt ſtroke quite overcame him—He gave ſomething to each of the children, got upon his horſe, and charging them to give his compliments to their papa, left them with tears in his eyes. He returned home about five o'clock, and ordered his ſervant to keep up the fire; told him to pack up his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and to lay his coats at the top.—He then appears to have wrote the following fragment of his letter to Charlotte.]

—YOU do not expect me;—you think I ſhall obey you, and that I ſhall not ſee you again till Chriſtmas-eve. Oh! Charlotte, to-day or never! On Chriſtmas-eve you will hold in your hand this paper; you will tremble, and you will wet it with

your tears.—I ought—I will—I am well pleaſed that I have fixed my reſolution.

[AT half an hour after ſix he went to Albert's; he found only Charlotte at home, who was much diſtreſſed at ſeeing him. She had, in converſation with her huſband, mentioned, with ſeeming negligence, that Werter would not come there again till Chriſtmas-eve; and very ſoon afterwards Albert ordered his horſe, and, notwithſtanding the rain, ſet out in order to ſettle ſome buſineſs with a ſteward in the neighbourhood. Charlotte knew that he had for a long time delayed making this viſit, which was to keep him a night from home. She felt his want of confidence, and was hurt. Alone, and full of ſorrow, ſhe recalled her paſt life, and found no cauſe of reproach either in her ſentiments or her conduct, or with regard to her huſband, from whom ſhe had a right to expect happineſs, and who was now the cauſe of her miſery. She then thought of

Werter, and blamed, but could not hate him. A ſecret ſympathy had attached her to him from their firſt acquaintance; and now, after ſo long an intimacy, after paſſing through ſo many different ſcenes, the impreſſion was engraved on her mind for ever. At length her full heart was relieved by tears, and ſhe fell into a ſoft melancholy, in which ſhe was quite wrapt and loſt; when with infinite aſtoniſhment and emotion ſhe heard Werter upon the ſtairs, aſking if ſhe was at home? It was too late to deny herſelf, and ſhe had not recovered her confuſion when he came in. "You have not kept your word," ſhe cried out. —"I did not promiſe any thing," he anſwered.—"But for both our ſakes," ſaid Charlotte, "you ſhould have granted what I aſked of you."—She ſent to ſome of her friends, and deſired them to come, that they might be witneſſes of the converſation; with the idea too, that Werter, thinking himſelf obliged to wait upon them home, would go away the ſooner.

He had brought ſome books; ſhe talked to him of them, and of ſome others, and introduced various indifferent ſubjects whilſt ſhe was expecting her friends; but the ſervant brought back their excuſes—one was engaged with company, and another prevented by the rain.

This unlucky circumſtance at firſt made Charlotte uneaſy, but the conſciouſneſs of her own innocence at length inſpired her with a noble confidence: and, above the chimeras of Albert's brain, and conſcious of her own purity of heart, ſhe rejected her firſt intention of calling in her maid; and after playing two or three minutes on the harpſicord to recover herſelf, ſhe went with great compoſure, and ſat down by Werter on the ſofa. "Have you nothing to read to me?" ſhe ſaid.—He anſwered, "No."—"Open that drawer," ſaid Charlotte, "and you will find your own tranſlation of ſome of the ſongs of Oſſian; I have not yet read it; I have been waiting till you could read it to me yourſelf, but for

for ſome time paſt you have been good for nothing."—He ſmiled, went to fetch the manuſcript, and ſhuddered as he took it up.—He ſat down with eyes ſwimming in tears, and began to read.—After reading for ſome time, he came to that affecting paſſage, where Armin deplores the loſs of his beloved daughter.

"Alone on the ſea-beat rock my daughter was heard to complain. Frequent and loud were her cries; nor could her father relieve her. All night I ſtood on the ſhore. I ſaw her by the faint beam of the moon. All night I heard her cries. Loud was the wind, and the rain beat hard on the ſide of the mountain. Before morning appeared, her voice was weak; it died away like the evening breeze among the graſs of the rocks. Spent with grief, ſhe expired; and left thee, Armin, alone! Gone is my ſtrength in the war; and fallen my pride among women!

"When the ſtorms of the mountain come, when the north lifts the waves on

high, I ſit by the ſounding ſhore, and look on the fatal rock. Often by the ſetting moon I ſee the ghoſts of my children. Half viewleſs they walk in mournful conference together. Will none of you ſpeak in pity? They do not regard their father! I am ſad, O Carmor! nor ſmall my cauſe of woe!"

A flood of tears ſtreamed from the eyes of Charlotte, and gave ſome relief to the oppreſſion of heart which ſhe felt. Werter threw down the paper, ſeized her hand, and wept over it. She leaned on the other arm, and held her handkerchief to her eyes. They were both of them in the utmoſt agitation. In this unhappy ſtory they felt their own misfortunes; together they felt them, and their tears flowed from the ſame ſource. The ardent eyes and lips of Werter were rivetted to her arm. She trembled, and wiſhed to go from him; but ſorrow and ſoft compaſſion preſſed upon her, and weighed her down. At length ſhe heaved a deep ſigh to recover herſelf,

herſelf, and ſobbing, deſired him to go on. Werter, quite exhauſted, took up the manuſcript, and in broken accents continued—

" Why doſt thou awake me, O gale? It ſeems to ſay, I am covered with the drops of heaven. The time of my fading is near, and the blaſt that ſhall ſcatter my leaves. To-morrow ſhall the traveller come: he that ſaw me in my beauty ſhall come; his eyes will ſearch the field, but they will not find me."

The whole force of theſe words fell like a ſtroke of thunder on the heart of the unfortunate Werter. In his deſpair he threw himſelf at Charlotte's feet, ſeized her hands, and put them to his eyes and to his forehead. An apprehenſion of his fatal project for the firſt time ſtruck her: her ſenſes were bewildered; ſhe preſſed his hands, preſſed them to her boſom, and leaning towards him, with emotions of tender pity, her warm cheek touched his.

Then they loſt ſight of every thing; the whole world diſappeared from before their eyes. He claſped her in his arms, ſtrained her to his boſom, and covered her trembling lips with paſſionate kiſſes. "Werter!" ſhe cried, in a faint voice, and turned her face from him; "Werter!" and with a feeble hand put him from her. At length, with the firm, determined voice of virtue, ſhe cried, "Werter!" and he was awed by it; and tearing himſelf from her arms, fell on his knees before her. Charlotte roſe, and with diſordered grief, and in a voice of love mixed with reſentment, ſaid, "This is the laſt time; Werter, you will never ſee me more!" She caſt one laſt tender look upon her unfortunate lover, then ran into her room, and bolted the door. Werter held out his arms to her, but did not dare to detain her. He continued on the ground with his head reſting on the ſofa for above half an hour, till he heard a noiſe;—it was the ſervant coming to lay the cloth. He then walked up and down

down the room; and when he was again left alone, he went to Charlotte's door, and in a low voice ſaid, "Charlotte! Charlotte! but one word more, only one adieu." He ſtopped, and liſtened. She made no anſwer.—He entreated—liſtened again; then tore himſelf from the place, crying, "Adieu, Charlotte! Adieu, for ever!"

Werter ran to the gate of the town; the guard knew him, and let him paſs. The night was dark and ſtormy; it rained and ſnowed. He came in about eleven. His ſervant perceived he was without a hat, but did not venture to ſay any thing; and when he undreſſed his maſter, he found his cloaths were all wet. His hat was afterwards found upon the point of a rock, where it is inconceivable that he could climb in ſuch a night, without breaking his neck. He went to bed, and ſlept till late next day. His ſervant found him writing when he carried his coffee to him.

He

He was adding what follows to Charlotte's letter.]

—FOR the laſt, laſt time, I now open my eyes. Alas! they will behold the ſun no more; a thick and gloomy fog hides it.—Yes! let Nature put on mourning—your child, your friend, your lover, draws near his end. Charlotte! the ſentiment I now feel, ſtands alone in my mind—it is ſtrongly marked; and yet nothing appears to me more like a dream, than when I ſay, This is the laſt day. The laſt! Charlotte, I have no idea that correſponds with this word—Laſt!—To-day I ſtand upright, I have all my ſtrength; to-morrow, cold and ſtiff, I ſhall lie extended on the ground. What is death? we do but dream when we talk of it.—I have ſeen many die;—but ſuch are the limits of our feeble nature, we have no clear conceptions of the beginning or end of our exiſtence. At this moment I ſtill poſſeſs myſelf—or rather, deareſt of women! I am

am thine;—and the next—detached, ſeparated—perhaps for ever!—No, Charlotte, no! we now exiſt, how can we be annihilated!—What is annihilation?—this too is a mere word, a ſound which conveys no idea to my mind!—Dead! Charlotte! ſhut up in a pit, ſo deep, ſo cold, ſo dark.—I had a friend who was every thing to me in my helpleſs youth; ſhe died: I followed her hearſe, I ſtood by the ſide of her grave when the coffin was let down; when I heard the creaking of the cords as they were let down and drawn up, when the firſt ſhovelful of earth was thrown in, and the coffin returned a hollow ſound, which grew fainter and fainter, till it was all covered in, I threw myſelf on the ground; my heart was ſmitten, grieved, rent; but I neither knew what had happened, nor what was to happen to me.—Death! Grave!—I underſtand not the words.

Forgive! forgive!—yeſterday—Alas! that moment ſhould have been the laſt of my

my life. I am beloved! am beloved by her! the delightful ſenſe of it for the firſt time penetrated, enflamed my heart. My lips ſtill feel the ſacred warmth they received from thine. New torrents of delight flow in upon my heart.—Forgive me! forgive me!

Oh! I knew that I was dear to you; I ſaw it in the firſt animated look which you directed to me; I knew it the firſt time you preſſed my hand: but when I was abſent from you, when I ſaw Albert by your ſide, my doubts and fears returned.

Do you recollect the flowers you ſent me, when at a diſagreeable and crowded aſſembly you could neither ſpeak to me, nor hold out your hand? Half the night I was on my knees before thoſe flowers; they were the pledges of affection: but theſe impreſſions grew fainter, and were at length effaced.—Every thing paſſes away; but a whole eternity could not extinguiſh the flame which was yeſterday kindled by your lips, the flame I feel within

within me.—She loves me! theſe arms have encircled her waiſt, theſe lips have trembled upon hers; ſhe is mine—Yes, Charlotte! you are mine for ever!

Albert is your huſband; but what of that? it is for this life only.—And in this life only it is a crime to love you, to wiſh to tear you from him! This is a crime, and I puniſh myſelf for it: I have enjoyed it—I have enjoyed the full delight of it.—I drew in a balm which has revived my ſoul. From this moment you are mine—yes, Charlotte, you are mine. I go before you, I go to my father, to thy father; I ſhall carry my ſorrows to the foot of his throne, and he will give me comfort till you arrive. Then will I fly to meet you, I will claim you, and remain with you for ever in the preſence of the Almighty. I do not dream, I do not rave; drawing near to the grave, my perceptions are more clear. We ſhall exiſt, we ſhall ſee one another again; we ſhall ſee your reſpected mother; I ſhall ſee her, I ſhall find

find her out, and I ſhall not be afraid to ſhew her my heart.—Your mother! your image!

[ABOUT eleven o'clock, Werter aſked his ſervant if Albert was returned: he anſwered, "Yes; for he had ſeen him go by on horſeback." Upon which Werter ſent him with the following note unſealed:

"Be ſo good to lend me your piſtols for a journey. Adieu!"

The tender Charlotte had paſſed the night in great agitation and diſtreſs; her blood boiled in her veins, and painful ſenſations rent her heart. The ardor of Werter's paſſionate embraces had, in ſpite of all her efforts, ſtolen into her boſom: at the ſame time ſhe recalled to her memory the days of her tranquillity and innocence, and they appeared to her with new charms. She dreaded the looks of her huſband, and the pointed irony of his queſtions,

queſtions, after he had heard of Werter's viſit. She had never been guilty of any falſehood, never had diſſembled, and for the firſt time ſhe felt the neceſſity of it. Her diſtreſs and repugnance made her think her fault more enormous; and yet ſhe could neither hate the author of it, nor even reſolve to ſee him no more. Melancholy and languid, ſhe was ſcarcely dreſſed when her huſband came in: his preſence was for the firſt time irkſome to her. She trembled leſt he ſhould perceive that ſhe had been crying, and had had no ſleep; and this apprehenſion encreaſed her embarraſſment. She received him with a kind of eagerneſs, which rather betrayed remorſe and confuſion, than expreſſed any real ſatisfaction. Albert obſerved it; and after opening ſome letters, he drily aſked her, whether there was any news, and who ſhe had ſeen in his abſence? She anſwered, after ſome heſitation, "Werter ſpent an hour here yeſterday."—"He chuſes his time well," ſaid Albert;

Albert; and went into his room. Charlotte remained alone for a quarter of an hour. The preſence of a man ſhe eſteemed and loved, gave a new turn to her thoughts: ſhe recollected all his kindneſs, the generoſity of his character, his attachment to her; and ſhe reproached herſelf for having ſo ill requited him. A ſecret impulſe prompted her to follow him; ſhe went to his room, and took her work with her, as ſhe ſometimes uſed to do. She aſked him, when ſhe went in, if he wanted any thing? he ſaid "No," and began to write: ſhe ſat down and worked. Albert from time to time took a few turns up and down the room; and then Charlotte addreſſed ſome diſcourſe to him: but he ſcarcely made her any anſwer, and ſat down again to his bureau. This behaviour was made more painful to her, by her endeavours to hide the concern ſhe felt from it, and to reſtrain the tears which were every moment ready to flow. They had paſſed an hour in this irkſome ſituation,

tion, when the arrival of Werter's ſervant compleated Charlotte's diſtreſs. As ſoon as Albert had read the note, he turned coldly to his wife, and ſaid, "Give him the piſtols—I wiſh him a good journey." Theſe words were a thunder-ſtroke to Charlotte; ſhe got up, and tottering, walked ſlowly to the wall, with a trembling hand took down the piſtols, and by degrees wiped off the duſt. She would have made ſtill more delay, had not a look from Albert obliged her to leave off. She then delivered the fatal arms to the ſervant, without being able to ſpeak a ſingle word; folded up her work, and went directly to her room, overcome with mortal grief, and her heart foreboding dreadful calamities. Sometimes ſhe was upon the point of going to her huſband, to throw herſelf at his feet, and to acquaint him with all that had happened the preceding evening; to tell him her fault, and her apprehenſions:—but then ſhe foreſaw that it would be uſeleſs, and

that Albert would certainly not be perſuaded to go to Werter's houſe. Dinner was ſerved; and a friend of Charlotte's, whom ſhe deſired to ſtay with her, helped to ſupport the converſation. When Werter heard that Charlotte had given the piſtols with her own hand to his ſervant, he received them with tranſport. He eat ſome bread, and drank a glaſs of wine, ſent his ſervant to dinner, and then began to write.]

To Charlotte, in continuation.

—THEY have been in your hands; you wiped the duſt from them: I give them a thouſand kiſſes; you have touched them. Ah! Heaven approves and favours my deſign. It is you, Charlotte, who furniſh me with the fatal inſtruments; I wiſhed to receive my death from your hand, and from your hand I am going to receive it. I have been enquiring of my ſervant—you trembled when you gave him the piſtols; but you did not bid me adieu.—Wretched!

ed! wretched that I am!—not one adieu! —In that moment, which unites me to you for ever, can your heart be ſhut againſt me? Oh! Charlotte! ages cannot wear out the impreſſion; yet I feel that you cannot hate the man who has this paſſionate love for you.

[AFTER dinner he had his trunk packed up, deſtroyed a great many papers, and went out to diſcharge ſome trifling debts. He returned home; and then went out again, notwithſtanding the rain, firſt to the Count's garden, and then farther into the country. He returned when night came on, and began to write again.]

—MY dear friend, I have for the laſt time ſeen the mountains, the foreſts, and the ſky. Adieu! — My deareſt mother, forgive me: my friend, I entreat you to comfort her. God bleſs you!—I have ſettled all my affairs; farewell! We ſhall

ſee one another again, we ſhall ſee one another when we are more happy.

I have but ill requited you, Albert; and you forgive me.—I have diſturbed the peace of your family; I have occaſioned a want of confidence between you. Adieu! I am going to put an end to all this. May my death remove every obſtacle to your happineſs! Albert, Albert, make that angel happy; and may the benediction of Heaven be upon you!

[HE finiſhed the ſettling of his papers; tore and burned a great many, others he ſealed up and directed to his friend. They contained looſe thoughts and maxims, ſome of which I have ſeen. At ten o'clock he ordered his fire to be made up, and a pint of wine to be brought to him, and then diſmiſſed his ſervant; who, with the reſt of the family, lay in another part of the houſe. The ſervant lay down in his cloaths, that he might be ſooner ready the next morning, his maſter having

ing told him that the poſt-horſes would be at the door before ſix o'clock.]

Werter, in continuation, to Charlotte.

PAST eleven o'clock. All is ſilent round me, and my ſoul is calm!—I render thanks to thee, O God! that thou granteſt to me in theſe laſt moments warmth and vigour.

I draw near to the window, my dear friend, and through clouds which are driven rapidly along by impetuous winds, I ſee ſome ſtars. Heavenly bodies! you will not fall: the Eternal ſupports both you and me! I have alſo ſeen the greater bear—favourite of all the conſtellations; for when I left you in the evening it uſed to ſhine oppoſite your door. How often have I looked at it with rapture! how often raiſed my hands towards it, and made it a witneſs of my felicity! And ſtill—Oh! Charlotte! what is there which does not bring your image before me? Do you

not ſurround me on all ſides; and have I not, like a child, collected together all the little things which you have made ſacred by your touch?

The profile, which was ſo dear to me, I return to you, Charlotte; and I pray you to have a regard for it. Thouſands of kiſſes have I imprinted on it, and a thouſand times have I addreſſed myſelf to it as I went out and came in.

I have wrote a note to your father, to beg he will protect my remains. At the corner of the church-yard, which looks towards the fields, there are two lime-trees; it is there I wiſh to reſt: this is in your father's power, and he will do it for his friend. Join your entreaties to mine. Perhaps pious Chriſtians will not chuſe that their bodies ſhould be interred near the corpſe of an unhappy wretch like me. Ah! let me then be laid in ſome remote valley; or by the ſide of the highway, that the Prieſt and the Levite, when they paſs my tomb, may lift their eyes to Heaven,

Heaven, and render thanks to the Lord, whilſt the Samaritan gives a tear to my fate.

Charlotte! I do not ſhudder now that I hold in my hand the fatal inſtrument of my death. You preſent it to me, and I do not draw back. All, all is now finiſhed;—this is the accompliſhment of all my hopes; thus all my vows are fulfilled!

Why had I not the ſatisfaction to die for you, Charlotte, to ſacrifice myſelf for you?—And could I reſtore peace and happineſs to your boſom, with what reſolution, with what pleaſure ſhould I meet my fate! But to a choſen few only it is given to ſhed their blood for thoſe who are dear to them, and augment their happineſs by the ſacrifice.

I wiſh, Charlotte, to be buried in the cloaths I now wear: you have touched them, and they are ſacred. I have aſked this favour too of your father.—My ſoul hovers over my grave.—My pockets are

not to be ſearched.—The knot of pink ribband, which you wore on your boſom the firſt time I ſaw you, ſurrounded by your children—(Dear children! I think I ſee them playing round you; give them a thouſand kiſſes, and tell them the fate of their unfortunate friend. Ah! at that firſt moment, how ſtrongly was I attracted to you! how unable ever ſince to looſe myſelf from you!)—This knot of ribband is to be buried with me; you gave it me on my birth-day.—Be at peace; let me entreat you, be at peace!—

They are loaded — the clock ſtrikes twelve — I go — Charlotte! Charlotte! Farewell! Farewell!

[ONE of the neighbours ſaw the flaſh, and heard the report of the piſtol; but every thing remaining quiet, he thought no more of it.

At ſix in the morning, his ſervant went into the room with a candle. He found his maſter ſtretched on the floor, and weltering

tering in his blood: he took him up in his arms, and ſpoke to him, but received no anſwer. Some ſmall ſymptoms of life ſtill appearing, the ſervant ran to fetch a ſurgeon, and then went to Albert's. Charlotte heard the gate-bell ring; an univerſal tremor ſeized her: ſhe waked her huſband, and both got up. The ſervant, all in tears, told them the dreadful event.—Charlotte fell ſenſeleſs at Albert's feet.

When the ſurgeon came to the unfortunate Werter, he was ſtill lying on the floor, and his pulſe beat: but the ball going in above his eye, had pierced through the ſkull. However, a vein was opened in his arm; the blood came, and he ſtill continued to breathe.

It was ſuppoſed, by the blood round his chair, that he committed this raſh action, as he was ſitting at his bureau; that he afterwards fell on the floor—He was found lying on his back, near the window. He was dreſſed in a blue frock and buff waiſtcoat, and had boots on.

Every

Every body in the houſe and in the neighbourhood, and in ſhort people from all parts of the town, ran to ſee him. Albert came in: Werter was laid on his bed, his head was bound up, and the paleneſs of death was on his face. There were ſtill ſome ſigns of life; but every moment they expected him to expire. He had drank only one glaſs of wine. Emilia Galoti was lying open upon his bureau.

I will ſay nothing of Albert's great diſtreſs, nor of the ſituation of Charlotte.—

The old Steward, as ſoon as he heard of this event, hurried to the houſe: he embraced his dying friend, and wept bitterly. His eldeſt boys ſoon followed him on foot; they threw themſelves on their knees by the ſide of Werter's bed, in the utmoſt deſpair, and kiſſed his hands and face. The eldeſt, who was his favourite, held him in his arms till he expired; and even then he was taken away by force.

At

At twelve Werter breathed his laſt. The Steward, by his preſence and his precautions, prevented any diſturbance amongſt the populace; and in the night the body of Werter was buried in the place he had himſelf choſen. The Steward and his ſons followed him to the grave. Albert was not able to do it. Charlotte's life was deſpaired of. The body was carried by labourers, and no prieſt attended.]

WERTER TO CHARLOTTE,

(A little before his Death.)

O Charlotte! Charlotte! all-accompliſh'd maid,
To whom my heart its homage long has paid;
In whom is center'd all that's good or fair;
Whoſe ſmiles attractive, whoſe enchanting air,
To every heart their influence extend,
And make a *lover*, where you meant a friend:
Whoſe ruby lips and melting voice diſpenſe
Melliſluous ſounds, with more than manly ſenſe;
Whoſe waving locks and ivory neck impart
The faireſt model for the ſculptor's art:
O lovely Charlotte! how ſhall I controul
The thrilling raptures that poſſeſs my ſoul?
How bid my paſſion yield to Reaſon's voice,
When Reaſon's ſelf muſt juſtify my choice?
Yet, tho' thy charms, the ſource of every joy,
My thoughts by day, my dreams by night employ;
Tho' thy lov'd image, by gay fancy dreſt,
With more than youthful ardor fires my breaſt;
Woe to the man that would thy heart beguile,
And that angelic ſoul with guilt defile!
Who'd dare to violate the nuptial rights,
(That ſacred bond which one to one unites.)
I *love*, but *covet* not, good Albert's wife,
Nor would deſtroy, my friend, thy peace for life.
But when at length thoſe bliſsful realms we gain,
Where no connubial claims our thoughts reſtrain;

Where

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Where ſelfiſh, human laws ſhall ceaſe to bind,
And univerſal love reigns unconfin'd:
Then, free as air, congenial ſouls ſhall meet:
And ſex, with holy rapture, ſex ſhall greet:
Then will I ſnatch dear Charlotte to my arms,
And chaſtely revel in celeſtial charms:
Ecſtatic bliſs ſhall groſſer love ſucceed,
And Charlotte make that ſcene—a heav'n indeed.

ON SUICIDE.

RASH youth, forbear! O lay that poniard by,
Nor boldly thus the wrath of Heaven defy!
Contend not with thy God, in impious ſtrife,
But calmly bear th' allotted ills of life;
Nor from thy ſtation treach'rouſly withdraw,
Aſſign'd by Heaven's inviolable *law*.
" With grief, with pain, or poverty oppreſt,
" No ray of hope to cheer the tortur'd breaſt;
" Or with ill-fortune, ſay, the wretch has ſtrove,
" Neglect of friends, or pangs of ſlighted love;
" What *law* commands *ſuch* wretches to endure
" Thoſe deſperate evils, which admit no cure?"
—The firſt primæval law, by Heav'n impreſt,
At man's creation, on the human breaſt,
The love of life—which nothing can controul,
Till loſs of reaſon ſtupifies the ſoul.
Self-preſervation is God's firm decree;
Can *ſelf-deſtruction* then from guilt be free?
The fear of death the ſtouteſt heart appals,
Then liſten to her voice—'tis Nature calls.
Haſt thou no offspring, no dear, faithful wife,
By love, by intereſt, anxious for thy life?
No aged father, or more tender mother?
No friend more dear than ſiſter or than brother?
If thou thyſelf canſt mock the poniard's ſmart,
Ah! plunge not thus the dagger in *their* heart!
But ſay then, whence theſe miſeries ariſe?
Though men are fooliſh, God is good and wiſe;
By whoſe kind plan, 'tis evident, mankind
Were for a life of happineſs deſign'd.

Thy

Thy griefs then ſpring from luxury and vice;
Thy poverty, perhaps, from cards and dice.
Does love, like Werter's, thy fond breaſt inſpire?
Let reaſon quench, at once, th' adult'rous fire;
Nor think t' intrude amidſt the bleſt above,
A ſoul defil'd with ſin and guilty love.
As death to *murder* is by Heaven decreed,
Self-murder ſurely is a fouler deed,
And death eternal muſt that crime ſucceed;
For Mercy's ſelf, though eager to relent,
Expects, at leaſt, our crimes we ſhould repent;
But what atonement can the wretch deviſe,
Who wilfully affronts his God—and dies?
Then yield not, coward like, to tranſient woe,
But bravely, like a Chriſtian, face thy foe;
Dare to be wretched, if thou dar'ſt to ſin,
Leſt, when theſe pains thou'ſt ended, *worſe* begin.

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